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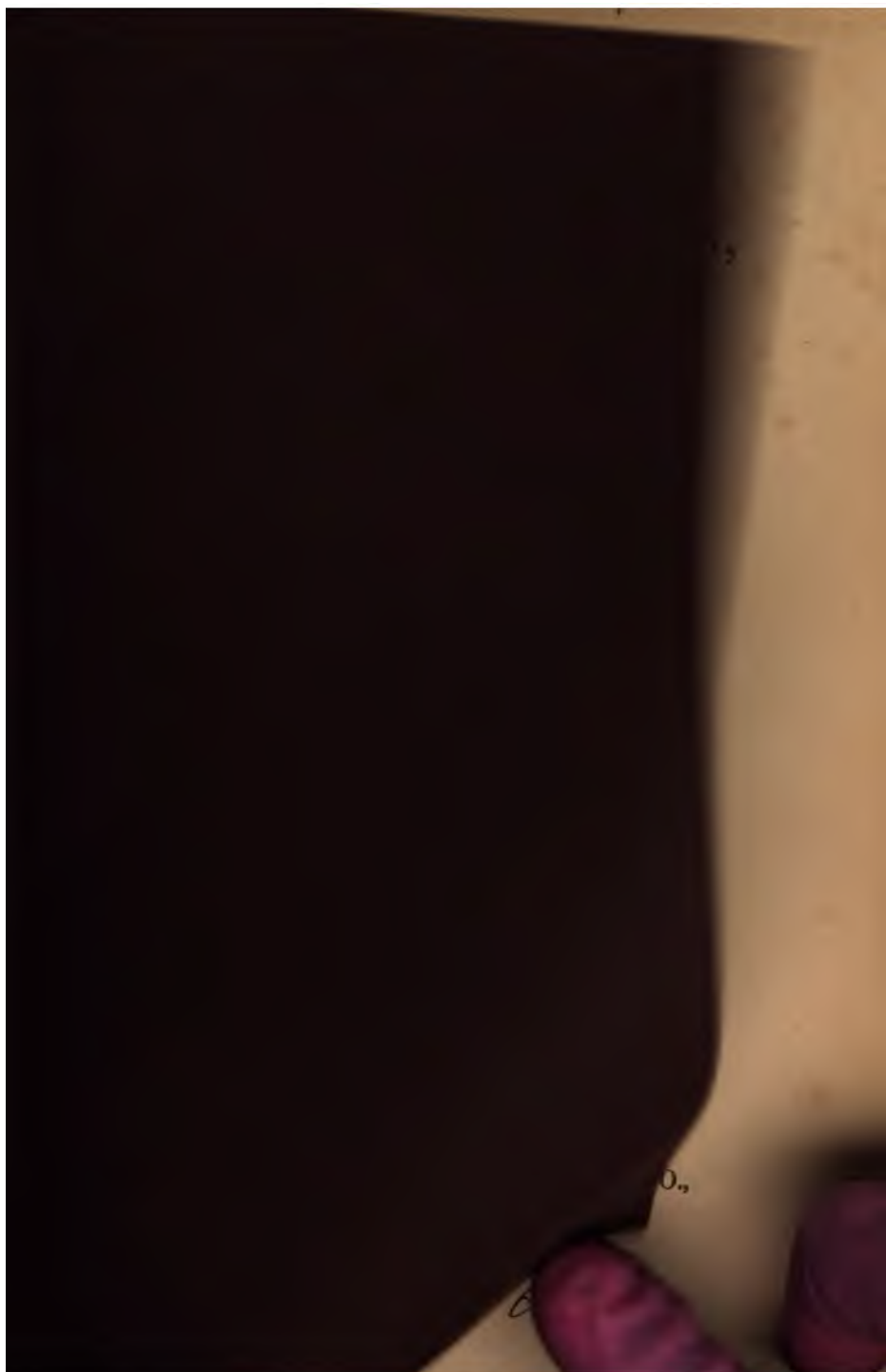
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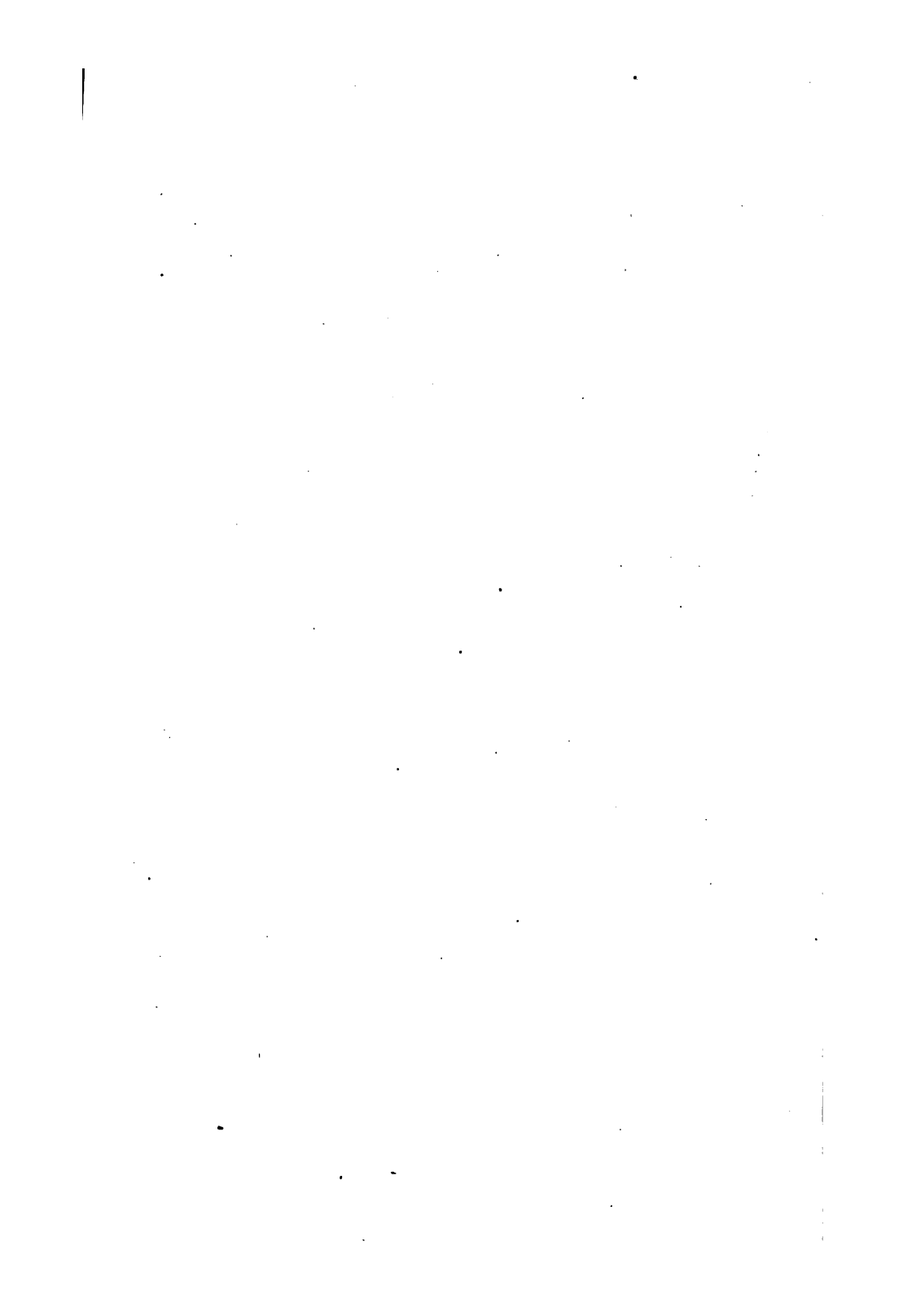




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HAROLD OVERDON,

ASHORE AND AFLOAT.

By CHARTLEY CASTLE,

AUTHOR OF 'MAINSTAY SWIMMINGTON, MERCHANT SERVICE,'

'JOHN WOODBURN, ROYAL NAVY,' &c.,

"Cease, rude Boreas, blustering railer,
List ye, landsmen, all to me;
Messmates, hear a brother sailor
Sing the dangers of the sea."



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HAROLD OVERDON.

CHAPTER I.

MANY years since, it matters not how far back we go—and in whatever parish—never mind. Suffice it to say that, situate in the far north of this glorious Old England of ours, there was a castle, ancient looking enough even then, although evident attempts had been made to modernize portions of it; yet was it so covered with old moss and ivy that you would be almost justified in thinking that the structure had sprung from the soil of itself.

This castle was surrounded by a moat—probably in troublous times a very useful auxiliary to the defences, that is, when filled with water, for when we make mention of it, it was quite dry—and no doubt had passed through many vicissitudes; however, it was a residence, and like most other residences, if endowed with

the power of speech, would have told strange stories of weal and woe, virtue and vice.

The present inhabitants of this old ivied castle were Sir Gilbert and Lady Ruth Gascoigne, with their only child, a daughter aged about thirteen.

A stern man that Sir Gilbert, and severe was he with his family; he ruled them with a rod of iron, and rather prided himself than otherwise on his austerity; domestic happiness had long been a stranger to them, in fact just for thirteen years; a girl came into the world instead of a boy, much to the disgust of the expecting father; and as each year passed without promise, a fresh burden of disagreeables—nay, worse, positive insult—was added to the troubles of the patient and long-suffering mother, until at length the lord and master, so far from attempting to conceal his utter indifference, took infinite pains to impress upon her the fact of their being hateful to him, those two who should have been so dear—the mother and her child.

In his presence he suffered no caresses between them, none of the fond maternal affection to be lavished, none of the sportive gaieties of youth. He made no excuse for love or weakness in the one, nor for the inex-

perience and folly (if it pleases you) of youth in the other. The expiring embers of affection between the parents was stamped angrily out under his iron heel; the heart of his ill-treated wife still secretly clung to him with that strange tenacity peculiar to woman's love; she endured all things, and was kind even towards the chronic disorders implanted so very deeply in the system of Sir Gilbert's personal life; every moment she had to dread the trial of temper, and yet she could manifest habitually the triumph of a noble and happy disposition. Although men are supposed to be the lords of the creation, yet in how few instances do they bear out their proper character! Now, with Sir Gilbert Gascoigne for a hero we can do nothing; therefore, as a matter of course, when we have done with him, we'll quietly put him on the shelf, and with pleasure, for we are bound to admit that our pride takes alarm, and on second thoughts, we regret having introduced him at all. Supremacy pertains most assuredly to the mind in more ways than one. A man who can rave like a maniac at the decrees of Providence, loses caste; it is all very well when worldly matters go wrong to have something or somebody to blame, because men are so confoundedly vain as to imagine that

anything or anybody is to blame rather than they themselves.

Surely a man with rank and wealth sufficient and to spare might have managed to glide down the stream, need have had no angular points to come constantly in collision with the world as it revolved; but yet, in spite of these advantages, many are so irascible that the world goes all wrong with them, is angry with them, stands always on the defensive, and recriminates angrily.

Sir Gilbert Gascoigne was at war with God, the world, and all mankind, and therefore his hands were pretty full.

Lady Ruth had at one time been very handsome; she was so still, but her many trials had imparted a certain grave expression to her countenance that Dame Nature had never intended should be found there. And really when husband and wife were together, any third person suddenly approaching them would have shuddered involuntarily, as a man does who finds himself enveloped with that damp cold fog, the unerring announcement in certain latitudes of the vicinity of icebergs. Yet she was not by nature cold, far from it, but such a deportment suited best her morose husband. Away from him she showed by her actions and con-

versation that romance had found lodgment in her disposition, and the excellence of her heart had gained much love for her among her friends and acquaintances, and prompted her to become the friend and advocate of all who were in distress and sorrow. She had hoped on in spite of unpromising circumstances, until her husband rendered that consummation so devoutly to be wished, impossible, put an end to all by taking an extreme step, destroying all chance for ever. Somebody says, "Galls and women are alike ; they live in hope, false hopes, hopes without any earthly foundation in nature but their own foolish conceits. Hope—what is hope? Expecting some uncertain thing or other to happen? Well, and suppose it does not happen, what then? Why, there is a nice little crop of disappointment to digest, that's all. Hope is a slippery gentleman, and has cheated more fools than ever Love did. I don't pity any folks that are cheated by hope, it serves them right. All nature is against hope. We must rely on Providence and on ourselves." She had hoped, but could not hope ever, it was over now. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. The love that had been the father's now belonged to the child, in addition to her own rightful share forming a rich treasure.

Poor little Ruth, she felt her father's cold neglect, it went even to her soul, and rankled there. Girls do somehow or another cling to the father, and boys to the mother.* She, our Ruth, was not as other children are, full of joy and mirth; all her rich young feelings had been nipped in the bud by her father's strange conduct, and she became silent as the grave, moved about like a shadow, and very rarely indulged in a romp or game of play; but she would gaze at the moon and stars for hours together and wonder whether the life beyond them would be more pleasant than the one she led; hers had hitherto been uneventful enough, although she was now old enough to notice a great deal that passed, yet she was too young to appropriate troubles to herself, or even share them with her mother. She herself was never positively ill-treated by her father, yet her little advances were always somewhat roughly repulsed. There was a mighty chasm, a huge vacuum between them; a large balance of tenderness lay at her banker's for him, but he never drew a cheque, and so the balance was transferred to the mother: she was extra-

* An old couplet hath it thus :

“ My daughter's my daughter all the days of her life,
My son is my son till he gets him a wife.”

vagant, and drew largely from the heart. She, our Ruth, had lived so far without knowing positive grief and sorrow.

She was not altogether lonely either in that old castle—there was a neighbourhood, and the Gascoignes had friends. Little Ruth had occasionally frolicsome companions who could rouse her into mirth, but that was seldom; but for these she might have grown up with the idea that life to her would be no enjoyment, that she had been brought into the world simply to endure the stings and arrows of outrageous Fortune.

Sir Gilbert, stormy and cloudy as he was at home, presented a smooth, unruffled exterior to the world, was a jolly boon companion over the bottle, and so passed for what he was not. How many of us, if we were only honest with ourselves, must acknowledge his case to be ours.

Let us have a look round and see the neighbours of this Cerberus. I'll venture a pound of sugar against your bottle of rum that we do not find such another among them.

The friends *par excellence* of the ladies at the Castle were the Overdons of Overdon; they resided within a mile of the Gascoignes, and also belonged to the *élite*. Mr. Overdon

was the opposite of Sir Gilbert in almost every way, and no very vast amount of cordiality passed between them; he was the descendant of an impoverished but ancient and highly distinguished family; the estate on which he resided had descended to him, but not so the great festivities and busy scenes of courtly pomp for which the mansion had in olden times been celebrated; yet we cannot say that former splendour had gradually dwindled into present ruin, for the estate was carefully cultivated according to the most approved principles of the times. The gardens showed that care and attention were lavished upon them, and the fish-ponds were in excellent order.

Overdon was a man of reserved, chilly exterior, but most undoubtedly a gentleman, and one of refined ideas; devotedly attached to his wife and family, he cared not to look for happiness beyond his gates, yet no benighted traveller was ever turned away. He was hospitable to a degree himself, but partook not of the hospitality of others.

Mrs. Overdon was in every way a fit and proper companion for such a husband, and so theirs was an abode of peace and love.

It is with their son Harold that we shall have most to do, therefore let us have a look

at him. He was a boy of some fourteen or fifteen years, and appeared especially cut out for that profession which he had long since chosen for himself,—namely, the navy.

His appearance was decidedly prepossessing, not that his face was handsome, but it was good-tempered and lighted up by a pair of dark blue eyes; his form was moulded on a small scale, but almost perfect, the shoulders broad and square, the head well put on and covered with curly hair.

There is a great deal in crisp, curly hair. We have particularly noticed that men possessed of it are game for anything; very seldom will you find them cowards. Of course Niggers are excluded,—we refer to white men.

Harold Overdon was not perfect, you know. He was fiery and somewhat self-willed, but take him altogether, his disposition was noble.

CHAPTER II.

HOWEVER grand and stately we may be, and with whatever amount of good advice (that dirt-cheap article) we may be charged, yet nearly all of us must acknowledge that there was a time when, as children, we had a very decidedly warm friendship,—in fact, what at the time appeared a deeply rooted love and affection for some playmate or other of the opposite sex.

The busy scenes of life as the world whirls on, the fierce struggle, may have driven away such feelings and remembrances far from us. Very possibly if we could at will call before us the former object of our attachment, we should experience a fearful shock on witnessing the ravages made by time, when the grandmother, or probably great-grandmother of a numerous progeny stood before us, in the place of the blooming lassie of our remembrance; and the blue-eyed, curly-headed boy, transformed, appeared before us now as the gouty squire, peppery old Indian general, or maimed,

blue-ribboned admiral ; yet such are the changes that come over the most fortunate of us, and we are powerless to help ourselves.

Harold and Ruth were desperately in love each with the other ; he was such a brave, manly, and (in her opinion) handsome boy ; she was such a pretty, loving little creature, and appeared to cling to him so. Of course he loved her ; how could he help it ? His firm determination was—and as he made no secret of it we need not—to marry her when he grew a big man ; and then how happy they would be together when they could have their own garden and eat fruit all day long. When together, these two were happy.

But the time came when my friend Harold was to “top his boom,” and be off to sea. Even heroes must have a commencement, and pass through many an unpleasant ordeal before they can “bear up” for Westminster Abbey.

A most unpleasant one was the parting to begin with, and all the boy’s pride was required to gulp down the sobs which would strive so hard to rise, and drive back the tears which appeared so suspiciously near overflowing his eyes. Luckily there is an end to all things here below, and as Harold found much on the road to amuse him, and allowed his thoughts

to run on his future career, these suspicious symptoms passed away, and he resolved to return a great man to claim his bride.

Mr. Overdon talked to him cheerfully of the countries he would be likely to see, and the many little things he might bring home with him, which would be so acceptable to his mother; related anecdotes of great men who had arrived at the pinnacle of fame, and whose names would be handed down in history to future generations for swelling the list of triumphs of our navy; and so, as each night found them many miles nearer to their destination than the preceding one, the boy began to look eagerly forward to their arrival. Although doing all in his power to amuse his son and keep up his spirits, yet the father's were far below par; he did not at all like the idea of Harold's leaving him, he would much rather have kept him at home, but then it was necessary that the lad should do something for himself, now that the family were so impoverished.

Mr. Overdon's opinion of poverty must go for nothing; he still possessed what any reasonable person would consider a handsome property; but then it was not what it had been in times past, when kings and princes had con-

descended to be hospitably entertained by his ancestors.

As the coach which conveyed the travellers entered the precincts of the modern Babylon, Harold considered himself in duty bound to be astonished at the immense ranges of buildings which caught his eye, and the dense mass of bustling people who thronged the thoroughfares; and by the same token he was somewhat disgusted when, arrived at its destination, the coach turned into the yard of the 'Boar's Head,' the coachman tossed his ribands over the backs of his horses, uncovered his legs from a huge mass of horsecloth, and prepared to vacate his elevated position. On the other hand his father was delighted at having so far got through what he considered a very disagreeable business: he had looked forward to this journey with disgust; he hated the bustle and apparent confusion of London streets; many years had passed since he last elbowed his way through them; then, to be sure, he had been a young man, and like most young men who are worth anything, had seen a very great deal that does not catch the eye without being sought. Now that he was there once again, he made up his mind to refresh his memory on many little points before returning,

and show Harold a little of life, so that now he was about to enter the world on his own account, his leading strings being severed, the boy might have the advantage of making acquaintance with it under such happy auspices as the skilful, paternal eye to watch for rocks and shoals, and the wary, paternal pilot to steer the newly-launched barque in safety through straits where the navigation might be dangerous and intricate.

The first thing, however, to be considered after a journey, is the inner man, which requires fortifying frequently, and never more so than on occasions like the present, when the process of being whirled through the bracing air on the top of a crack four or six-horse coach has been undergone for any length of time.

There was a certain something about Mr. Overdon that greatly influenced mine host of the Blue Boar in his reception of that important personage, and the manner in which he was bowed to the best accommodation the house would afford, escorted by a whole regiment of menials, was taken by the Squire in such a manner as to show at once that it was the sort of thing he had been accustomed to all his life, and the quiet dignity of the son showed him to be a "chip of the old block."

The *cuisine* having received ample justice, Mr. Overdon and his son very shortly sought their couches, and in the arms of Morpheus recruited their strength preparatory to the fatigues of the approaching day.

Harold Overdon was beyond the age at which aspiring heroes usually entered the service; *however, with plenty of interest it is quite startling to see how difficulties melt away like snow beneath the rays of the sun*; and what would prove an immovable obstruction in the path of the friendless lad, proves rather an advantage than otherwise to him who has powerful influence at his back, because there has been better opportunity for education. Sir Jeremy Diddler happened at this time to be the man in power, and between Squire Overdon and Sir Jeremy there happened to be the tie of consanguinity. What wonder, then, that all was as it should be.

The Overdons called on this great man, who was not particular in his inquiries as to age, but extremely anxious *to serve his kinsman*, and so no disagreeable questions were asked. Sir Jeremy blandly inquired if Harold could repeat the Lord's Prayer. Now, as Harold's mother happened to have taught him that, of course the reply was in the affirmative.

"You of course know the Ten Commandments?"

Mr. Overdon here remarked that Sir Jeremy would find the boy perfectly *au fait* at them.

"Ah," said the great man, "then I need ask no further questions, as of course on such an important point you would not mislead me."

Mr. Overdon placed his hand on his heart (or somewhere about the latitude and longitude that that important part of the human frame is supposed to be situate) and bowed solemnly.

"One moment," said Diddler, evidently struck with a bright idea; "figures are a great point in these examinations, and the rules of the service require a perfect acquaintance with them. Now, Harold, look at me and take time to reply to this question, for it is an important one, and more than you may fancy depends upon it:—If a herring-and-a-half cost three-halfpence, how much would three cost?"

And the facetious old gentleman chuckled quietly, pulled up his stock and looked grand. Harold took the full time allowed and then gave his answer, which appeared satisfactory; for Sir Jeremy Diddler immediately shook hands with him, and thus delivered himself:

"Now, my dear boy, you have passed your examination with great credit to yourself, and

(after consulting with my colleagues on this important matter) very shortly I hope to send you your appointment to some ship as midshipman; always remember that you may look forward to the time when you will be in command of one of his Majesty's finest ships, and behave yourself accordingly."

The process of leave-taking was undergone; the great man grumbled out something about "honour of company to dinner," which we did not catch, and Mr. Overdon and his son were once more gazing on the restless crowd,—Harold, as jolly as a sandboy (for hadn't he passed his examination?); his father felt rather down in the mouth, for now that he had been and gone and done it, of course it was too late to try and bias the lad; yet the pill was bitter. Suddenly a bright idea struck him—the boy must see the sights, and among them were the hospitals; probably the scenes to be witnessed in one of these temples of humanity would sicken him, especially if cases were judiciously applied. Accordingly off they started at once, the father amusing his son by the way very much in the following strain:

"The profession you have chosen, my dear Harold, is undoubtedly a most honourable one,

but at the same time in it you will have to pass through many scenes which will harrow your soul. Now, as you cannot too soon become accustomed to scenes of butchery and blood, I have selected an hospital as a fit and proper place for us to finish the morning in. Hospitals differ from your future homes, inasmuch as they certainly are magnificent buildings, and are built expressly for purposes of humanity, and within them everything is to be found that can possibly be conducive to help the patient in his time of trial and danger. Every care is taken; liberality prevails; cleanliness is strictly enforced; science called in without stint; all that can be thought of is pressed into the service and employed in alleviating suffering." And so he kept on pointing out every little thing as they passed through the different wards; all was admirable, and nobody could have found fault with anything. Harold was much pleased, the extent of the building alone much astonished him; his treat was in store,—they came to the dissecting room, and then it was that he first felt uncomfortable at the thought which naturally would rise respecting the profession he had chosen, and the very possible consequence to himself in case of action. First, the agony of the wound, then all the horrors attending

amputation of a limb, not so well managed then as now. He turned pale and sickened at the ideas which rushed through his mind; the watchful father came to the conclusion that this bright idea was all a mistake, and so they hurriedly withdrew, and once more sought the open air.

They walked about and amused themselves until dinner-time, then, after having partaken of some of the good things of this life, off they started for the Opera House. "This," thought Overdon, "will be a treat for Harold, and for me at the same time;" and so it was.

The bright array of lights, the colossal dimensions of the building, the immense sweep of boxes with their load of beauty, the fairest women in the world, all served to charm; then came the ballet with its seducing figurantes, seducing only at a distance,—for after all what a resemblance is there to the painted sepulchre. Alas, that it should be so! Painting, lacing, screwing into shape is destructive to a degree, and a near view most invariably destroys the charm. The boy, though, was delighted; sylphs and fairies floated through his brain until he became quite excited, clapped his hands and shouted like one bereft. Poor little Ruth, egad! she was put on the shelf at once; so

much for boy's love. Censor was beside him though, with a heart subdued and slow, to curb the hot and restless; age at times is a fit companion for youth.

When the entertainment was almost concluded, the father rose, took charge of his boy and led him round to the place of exit for the professionals; then Harold had his sultanas pointed out to him, that quickly annihilated romance; there he saw shrunken cheeks, inflamed eyes, the skin coarse, the emaciated forms clothed in rags, and the feet slipshod, in lieu of the spangled dress and sandalled fairy slipper; all was changed now. Romance was taken out of him with a vengeance, when he was made to understand that these poor miserable wretches and the splendid figurantes were one and the same; he had almost fancied them born princesses, raised in the lap of luxury, blowing off steam as it were, capering about in the exuberance of spirits.

Next morning, while they were at breakfast the waiter appeared, bearing a portentous-looking envelope, containing the wished-for appointment to the 'Brilliant,' sloop-of-war at Portsmouth, ready for sea and waiting orders; there was also an intimation that Harold had better join with all convenient speed.

No time was to be lost in procuring an outfit for the young officer. Mr. Overdon had decided that he should start quite new from stem to stern, —in fact, bend a new suit of sails altogether. Away they posted to a first-class fashionable establishment, recommended by Sir Jeremy Diddler, and there purchases were made to a vast extent. While deeply employed in the inspection of different articles, in swaggered a rather seedy-looking, middle-aged man in plain clothes, and commenced by taking rather a particular interest in what was going forward.

“Handkerchiefs!” said he suddenly, as Mr. Overdon was overhauling some with a view to purchasing, “we don’t use such things in the service until we become oldsters; nothing comes up to the forefinger and thumb.”

The old Squire was rather astonished, but took no notice, thinking possibly that the person might be labouring under the influence of strong drink; accordingly he proceeded with his business until he came to socks, and then again he was interrupted by the stranger.

“Why, you must be out of your senses, my good man,” said he, “if you are going to supply this youngster with such things; nobody but the captain wears socks.”

"Pray, sir, may I inquire if you are addressing your conversation to me?"

"Well, yes, rather, I should say; considering that there's only Cabbage, the youngster, and you in the shop, my remarks apply to you, I think."

This was said with an air of consummate impudence, and the Squire felt himself gradually wax warm; so he said, very quietly:

"If I suffer you to remain in the shop whilst I transact my business, you must remain silent; if, on the contrary, you indulge yourself by wagging your tongue to my annoyance, I shall be under the painful necessity of turning you out; as you are the only person in the shop besides Cabbage (as you facetiously style Mr. Schneider) and my son, why my remarks apply rather unmistakably to you, I am inclined to think."

"And rather cool they are too, considering that this happens to be my governor's place, and the party attending upon you happens to be my revered parent."

"Indeed I was not aware of that, Mr. Schneider, otherwise possibly I might have taken other measures with your son," said Overdon, turning round to the respectable, venerable-looking old fellow.

"Oh, pray don't apologize, sir," said the tailor, who was evidently much disconcerted at

the appearance of his hopeful; "Charles was very wrong to take such an unwarrantable liberty."

"Mind what you say, governor," broke in the affectionate son; "first lieutenants of sloops-of-war cannot be taxed in that way. However, ta, ta, I'll look in again shortly, because I want to see you most particular." And out he went, slamming the door behind him, leaving our friends with his father to proceed unmolested with their purchases.

"First lieutenants of sloops-of-war," thought Overdon. "By George, what am I doing with Harold, if this animal should be what would by implication appear he really is? Bah! such a thing cannot be possible, a tailor's son, too; very respectable men in their way, very much so, but, bless me, 'twouldn't do at all; so insufferably vulgar,—forefinger and thumb. What fearful atrocity could he possibly hint at? Socks not worn? that must really be a mistake. I'll ask Diddler; besides, I could see the fellow's discoloured hose myself; he wears them at all events, and does not profess to be a captain."

CHAPTER III.

WE shall now join father and son on the road to Portsmouth, the latter attired in his uniform, but not quite so proud of it as he might have been had he not seen First-Lieutenant Schneider, yet in very fair spirits considering, and constantly amused by the quaint remarks of some seamen who were returning from leave rather lighter in purse than when they had set out.

"What d'ye think, Bill," said one, "baccy don't agree with the filigree inside of a watch nohow. Why, now, I took this 'ere ticker to a man as understood that sort of thing, and blow me if he didn't say, 'Why, this ticker's full of tobacco!' 'Knows that as well as you can tell me,' says I. 'Well, then, do you know that you've pretty near spoilt'en?' says he. 'No,' says I. 'I'll put it to rights for thirty shillings, not a farthing less,' says he. 'Go ahead with it then, old Grampus,' says I; and sure enough he goes well enough now, that is, when Sal winds 'en up."

"Now then, gentlemen," shouted Jehu, dismounting, "we allow twenty minutes here for refreshment."

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And accordingly all hands quickly availed themselves of the chance. Mr. Overdon, thinking it just as well to appear gracious to any of the class of men with whom his son would have to do his duty, very kindly invited the four sailors to join them in a snack, and stared with astonishment at the manner in which Jack turned-to at the eatables and pitched into hot punch. However, there was an honest twist about them that the old Squire liked; they were rough-and-ready certainly, and impudent fellows to boot, he thought, when they all sherried after the landlord's pretty daughter to get a kiss; but then, as they observed, a kiss pleased them and didn't hurt her; then there was a mother with her young child inside, a widow too evidently—the tars insisted on handling the baby, and did so as gently as the mother herself could have done. They made her partake of their good cheer, and caused the child to chuckle and crow with delight at being nursed by such a rollicking set of boys. A sergeant of foot, also a passenger inside, certainly looked savage, but what cared Jack for that?

And so the twenty minutes passed; all hands outside were now on speaking acquaintance. As a matter of course there was a dash of respect when Overdon or his son were addressed. Jack didn't quite know who the stately old buffer was.

"Now, my man," said the Squire, turning to one of the men, "what's your name?"

"Will Jarvis, your honour," answered the man, touching his hat.

"Well, Jarvis, will you relate some of your adventures to us, it will serve to wile away time and amuse us no doubt at the same time."

"Spin your honour a yarn; yes, I will surely; but what shall it be, I ain't much of a hand at dictionary?"

"Oh, blow the dictionary," said one of his chums, "let's have summut about the 'Rattler,' that's the craft for me."

"Well, you see, your honours and shipmates, when I was in the 'Rattler,' we was terrible short-handed and was obliged to tack on to that most infarnal dodge of pressing men from the merchant service. I was pressed myself, d'ye see, but then that's neither here nor there. Well, one fine day we falls in with a hooker, and I was among the gang sent aboard of her on this onpleasant duty; only one chap looked

likely out of the six, and by jingo he tried damned hard to weather on us, but 'twarn't no go. 'Well,' says he to the officer, 'I don't know what your honour wants of me, 'cause I ain't no good, seeing as how I've only got one arm; t'other ain't no good to me since I got the rheumatiz.' 'Never mind, my fine fellow,' says the luftenant, 'we'll chance all that, the doctor'll soon put you to rights.' And so he was bundled, bag and baggage, neck and crop, into the boat. He wasn't down on his luck neither, for, says he, 'I can do sommut as cook's mate, but deuce a thing else; as to going aloft, it's all my eye, for I can't so much as lift my hand to my head.' Anyhow we managed to git 'en on board, and then Old Sawbones—our doctor, you know, yer honour—examined 'en, but deuce a bit could he find the matter. Howsomever, a stitch of work with this arm none of 'em couldn't get out of 'en.

"Now, old Rigby, our skipper, and a d—d good skipper he was too, though he did used to stick into cocktail pretty strong while we was on the West India station. Well, never mind that, as I was a-saying, old Rigby used very often to try and catch 'en tripping, but it warn't no go; there the blessed thing hung

down as though 'twas dead, d'ye twig? and nothing that was done to it did no good.

"Rigby got a hidea into his head that this man was a smart seaman, and all hands couldn't move 'en, but considered 'en a king's hard bargain, 'cause he was voracious as a shark, and took his nip of rum kindly enough. Well, we knocked about for months and months, but the sharpest amongst us couldn't twig any movement in that blessed arm, till one fine day we had luck, and fell in with a wopping frigate, and pretty soon brought her to action, although she did fight d—d shy of us. Now all the action through we kept a-squinting at this here chap to see whether or no 'twarn't all flam, but no, not a bit of it; there the blessed arm was hung down for all the world like a pump-handle, and only one of his arms gave his weight to the gun-tackle fall.

"Atween old Rigby and Jim there was a kind o' soft feeling though, and, dammee, through that we found 'en out. The Skipper happened to pass close to the gun where Jim sarved, and just then a shot took 'en, and he dropped, or would a' dropped, but Jim caught 'en in *both* his arms! 'Ah, my lad,' says the Skipper, 'you've found a use for your other arm at last, and painful as my wound is, by G—d

I'm glad it's got you the use of it, and I hope you'll become the first hand in the ship, and so an ornament to the service, though you did come into it unceremonious ; every good seaman is in my opinion a jewel added to the crown.' Now, there's an end o' my yarn, your honour ; but what the devil's the meaning of all that sheevo ?"

Evidently there was a great rumpus inside the coach, and the sound of voices, gruff as well as shrill, in high dispute, fell upon the ear.

"By jingo, here's a row," said Jarvis, "and my little widow in for it for a guinea. Aye, there goes that blessed babby, bless his dear little weak lungs ; hold on a moment, and I'll soon be alongside of you, my beauty ; we're going to heave-to directly," he shouted.

They soon did heave-to, and Jarvis with his chums appeared at the door ; the former shoved his head into the window, and inquired what the deuce was the row, glancing very savagely at the non-commissioned officer, whose frank, good-humoured, jovial countenance indicated mirth.

In the other corner of the coach, on the same side, sat a moon-faced man of five-and-forty or thereabouts, with an enormous corporation,

but still intent on adding to his size, as appeared by a huge parcel of sandwiches on his knee, and a bottle of port which he held in his hand. Opposite the stout gentleman was seated Will Jarvis's widow (as he called her), looking young, pretty, and fresh, holding on her lap the little puppet whose cries had been the cause of the disturbance, on account of the corpulent gentleman's asserting that the cry of a baby interfered with his digestion, and so recommending a remedy which the poor widow did not much approve of trying in his presence; however needs must when the old gentleman drives, and so when our friend Will appeared, the cries were appeased by a rosy application to its little rosy mouth. Jarvis determined to complete the last stage inside, so as to be the better enabled to defend his new fair friend if necessary, and at all events he made up his mind to try and make himself particularly agreeable. It is really astonishing how very gallant Jack can be when he likes, take him when he is in the humour. No sooner had he brought himself to an anchor, than he opened fire mildly by tapping the baby's cheeks.

"Poor little chap, he don't know what to make of this at all."

"I hope he won't inconvenience you, sir, at all?"

"Inconvenience me? not the slightest in the world, I can assure you; why, he's a little hangel, that he is."

"Law, it's very kind of you to say so, I'm sure, sir."

"I'm only thinking what a fool I've been to ride outside so long, why it's twice as comfortable here, and I always thinks 'tis such a pretty sight to see a little cratur like that a-drinking milk from the buzum."

The widow coloured rather, and drew her shawl round the baby's head, perhaps to protect it from the draught. Yet that widow had heard about sailors eating bank-notes between their bread and butter, and all the rest of the marvellous yarns at one time extant. There might be a chance here for number two, and she could make a much better use of them than that. So the baby's head was a little uncovered again, and Master Will was rewarded now and then for his numerous civilities by a glance from her eye, or a sly pressure of the knee.

All was now quiet again, the soldier was deep in a romance, the fat man hard at work consuming his sandwiches, drinking his wine,

and rubbing his stomach, when there came from the depths of his rotundity a growl like that of a wild beast surprised in his lair.

"Pooh!" he roared, "there's that damned child again, why its enough to breed a fever this time," and he smothered his face in his handkerchief.

"Bah!" said Will, "never mind, my dear, let me help you; these things will happen. Shall I take hold of 'em?"

"No thank you, sir, I can manage. This is a little accident very common to infants; bless his heart he can't help it." And so she at once proceeded to examine the extent of damage done, this made matters rather worse. He of the sandwiches burst out again.

"Those sort of things ought to be packed in hampers, and hung on behind, they're not fit to travel inside a coach; I shall certainly complain of it at the office when we arrive, it's turned my stomach quite," and he packed up his sandwiches, put them in his pocket, and took an awful nip at his wine.

"At all events you won't take much harm anyway I'm thinking, and as to this 'ere accident you did the same yourself some fifty years ago, so the sooner you bring up the better." And Will folded the soiled article

neatly and put it in his pocket (in spite of the widow's faint remonstrance), watching closely the handy manner in which the damage was repaired by her neat fingers.

The fat man, however, waxed exceeding wrath, and made an attempt to personate the bully, but Jack was as good as his master, and there was every appearance of an alarming rupture. Will, standing by the little widow manfully, finally settled matters by taking charge of the infant himself; this proceeding the young one objected to, and set up such a yell that he of the stomach could stand it no longer, so he shoved his head out of the window and shouted to Jehu. Jehu pulled up, the fat man with much difficulty ascended to the roof of the coach, amid the congratulations of the tars at the surprising activity of a man of such enormous proportions as the traveller. Will gave the non-commissioned officer a pretty broad hint to follow suit, but the son of Mars quietly turned it off by saying something about "having travelled on that road so frequently, he had no particular desire to admire a country he so well knew." Jarvis was in love now (or at least fancied himself so, no uncommon thing for a sailor, you know), and so turning to his widow,

in a low tone he told her all about his mother's cottage at Wimmering, and how glad the old woman would be of a companion,—what a quantity of prize-money he made,—and how very paternal he felt towards the boy; what a beautiful boy he was, that it would break his heart to part with him, and clewed up by offering to splice her slick off the reel. The widow was not so much astonished as one would have thought, but then she had grace enough to blush, and smiled most encouragingly, at the same time giving him to understand that although of course a little consideration on her part would be necessary, yet that he had not much to fear on the score of her hardness of heart, for a gipsy woman who told her fortune had said that her second husband would be a smart sailor-man, with black curly hair and dark eyes, and that they would live very happy together, and have—

“Well, my beauty, have what? heave ahead.”

“Perhaps I may tell you some day, but I really can't now, you know.”

While all this had been occurring inside, those on the outside had not been idle. Harold and his father kept the sailors employed in answering questions; the former gained a great deal of information respecting his duties. Jack

is not very loth to teach when he sees a lad anxious to learn, and so Harold now knew all the sails, from the flying gib to the spanker, —all about the masts, yards, and arrangements of the hull,—the bells of the watch, how many to relieve at, and at how many to be relieved ; in fact, altogether he had laid in a very decent stock of matter which would be of service to him in his profession.

Mr. Overdon, meantime, had got hold of another tar, and began talking to him of the service in general, and at length touched on one ship in particular, the ‘Brilliant.’ What did Jack think of her? had anyone any idea of her probable destination? what sort of man was the captain? and so on.

Jack gave a quick, shrewd glance at the Squire, then shook his head slowly, closed one eye, turned his quid until it appeared ready to start through his cheek, then said, “He didn’t know nothing about her, not at all.”

At the same time his look was meant to convey a very different idea. He knew all about her, her duties and belongings, but then in those times as in these it was dangerous to be too communicative until you knew to whom you were addressing yourself, and by whom you might be overheard ; Mr. Overdon twigged the

look, stuck his hand into his breeches-pocket, and pulled out one of those pretty pieces not now coined—a guinea—stuck it in his eye, and asked Jack if he was near-sighted.

“No, your honour,” was the reply; “I see plainly enough upon what part of the coast you are, but then comes the question, Who may you be? Why, the new Port Admiral for aught I know, that would be a pretty go—the heaviest of them ere pieces ever coined wouldn’t pay for the damage.”

“My friend, I’m no Port Admiral, nor in fact am I in any way connected with the service myself personally, therefore you need labour under no apprehension. The fact is, I am now taking my son down to Portsmouth, as you may see; he has taken the shilling and now belongs to her Majesty’s ship ‘Brilliant,’ a sloop-of-war I believe, therefore of course I am anxious to know all about her. This little explanation will account for my anxiety to hear your opinion, I myself being in a state of utter darkness in nautical matters.”

“More’s the pity, your honour, more’s the pity; now my idea is that a man ought to know pretty well what he’s a doing afore he does it, and it seems pretty clear to me that you’ve been a working in the dark. Now as

regards this ere 'Brilliant,' she's as smart a little sloop as flies the pendant, but that don't matter, it's the hofficers as makes the ship, and her hofficers is a d——d bad set, and didn't ought properly to be in the sarvice at all, 'cause they're duffers."

"Duffers, my good man, what do you mean?"

"Why, your honour, they got into the sarvice unregular like; their fathers was tradesmen like my poor old dad, only in a larger way, and gived receipts in full for all that was owed to 'em by hofficers with plenty of hinterest, on conditions that their sons was to be took into the sarvice and shoved ahead; then every now and agin you know, yer honour, there arrived a heavy bank-note, and that was as much as to say, another step for my boy, if you please, and whether you please or no you must do it. Then of course the hofficer didn't know where the tin comed from. Oh no, in course not."

"Then you mean to say that the 'Brilliant' is thus officered, do you? Really, my good man, I am much indebted to you, more in fact than I can tell you, because I wish my son to get disgusted with the service."

The tar continued: "Now old Boodle's father kept a jimcrack shop in High Street, and he's cap'en; then there's the first lieu-

tenant, he's a beauty, he is — his father's a tailor up in Lon'on, and a 'opeful son he's got—"

"First lieutenant—tailor up in London," interrupted old Overdon. "Surely, my good friend, his name's not—no, pooh! it can't be—the fact is I thought it a strange coincidence. My son and myself were engaged in making purchases at an outfitter's, when his son burst into the shop, and behaved in such an extraordinary manner that I was under the painful necessity of warning him that there was a limit to human endurance."

"And what might the name of that outfitter be, your honour? if I might make so bold as to ax."

"Why, Schneider—but of course it cannot be, although you have certainly enlightened me strangely."

Jack once more closed his eye, turned his quid, and looked knowing.

"That's the identical—blowed, if I didn't think so: ain't he a beauty for first luff, your honour? I hates that feller like the Halmighty hates sin, he broke the best warrant hoffer going, and that's my brother-in-law, for nothing, and then when he'd got 'en properly in his clutches, why he gave 'en the cat. Oh, she's

a nice hooker that, and then that young gentleman to be a going to join her; but ain't your honour got no friends to get 'en clear afore it's too late, 'cause it do seem hard to send 'en to sea in a floating hell?"

"I'm more likely to gain my own end as matters stand," said Overdon aloud, and then to himself: "Poor Harold, it does appear cruel to expose him to hard treatment, he will be astonished when he sees Mr. Schneider and finds out who he is—perhaps the poor fellow will go back with me yet;" and the fond father hoped it might be so.

CHAPTER IV.

WE have heard the sailor's opinions pretty freely expressed, but the reader must bear in mind that the old gentleman who shall be nameless is never so black as he is painted; we are tired of the road and anxious once more to find ourselves afloat.

The 'Brilliant' was a smart little vessel enough of her class. She was brig-rigged, and carried fourteen carronades—mere popguns of course to the metal now in favour, but at the same time, although barking dogs, they did bite, and very hard too, sometimes. She mounted guard on the coast of France, and was as well known all along there as at Portsmouth. The particular duty assigned to her was exceedingly unpleasant, and would not at all have suited a first-class man. So many leagues each way from Calais was her beat, and to it she was kept most pertinaciously: perhaps the bigwigs almost hoped that something might happen to her and all on board, and so clear them from just so many living

reproaches as there happened to be officers on board, who get into the navy on the back of receipted bills. But, however that might be, on the coast of France she was constantly harassing and alarming; keeping a close watch over they hardly knew what, gleaning information they could make nothing of; ascertaining the strength of garrisons; finding out the movement of troops. Often and often she landed persons who were to act as spies (although that may be a strong term rather for secret emissaries), and had as often re-embarked them.

The redoubtable commander who gloried in the euphonious name of Boodle, was a short, thick-set man, with a jolly red face, looking as though he was fond of liberal potations. A man well-fitted for such work was he (and yet poor Boodle had good points in his character too), as perhaps the bigwigs at the Admiralty knew well enough, and so very properly kept him at it.

Cloudy, dark, dismal weather and channel fogs were his especial delight; for at such times with muffled oars he sneaked into harbours, boarded fishing-boats, seized their occupants, lugged them on board the 'Brilliant,' plied them well with grog, and then caused

them to undergo the process of pumping. As soon as they were pumped dry, they had served his turn, and so he would put them on board their own craft again.

The fishermen and all others there and thereabouts knew old Boodle perfectly well, and used to cram him chock-a-block with a precious pack of lies, which as a matter of course were all taken in as Gospel truths. But then neither the authorities at the Admiralty, nor even old Boodle himself, knew any better, and so what did it matter? Frogs in particular were of great service in many ways to the 'Brilliant' and her commander. Under their cover, so to speak, they could slip along well in-shore (for Boodle and his officers, to do them justice, knew almost every pebble and grain of sand, so they had no fear of bumping her) and pick up a prize sometimes worth having, with plenty of *eau-de-vie* and other valuable articles on board; but then the men in charge of these vessels knew well enough that the sloop of war would pick them up, and so generally managed to have got a few papers together, and a *canard* or two all ready, besides a case or so of brandy. Thus Boodle levied black-mail, and the frogs purchased their freedom; for all the good they did, the sloop

and her crew might as well have been up Portsmouth harbour, but then, they were out of the way and didn't bother, besides keeping together, and learning their duty as seamen; for most assuredly they had queer weather often enough — some of your regular-built easterly gales which, as a class, have more lives than a cat is presumed to have, blow for ever like a huge pair of blacksmith's bellows, till blown out; and then make way for a sneezer in the shape of a nor'-westerly or sou'-westerly buster; but seldom does weather interfere very materially with a British man-of-war; they appear to ride over and through all, as comfortably as a duck in a pond to the old salt, apparently straining nothing. So the 'Brilliant' weathered it out, and when the wind and sea went down, there she remained as tight as a bottle.

At length the coach which was conveying our friends arrived at Portsmouth. The party inside we will finish first, and then proceed with those on the outside, with whom we have more particularly to do.

Will Jarvis still held the infant in his arms, and was, to all appearance, entirely occupied with his charge; covering it up for fear it

should catch cold, and then uncovering it for fear it should be too hot—speaking to it, kissing it (probably for the sake of the mother), and trying his utmost to make it smiling and happy; in fact, Jarvis was high busy, the task was so new to him, that he had had no time to consider what he should do, and how he should provide shelter for the widow and his little *protégé* until next morning. The widow had another nine or ten miles to go before reaching her home, and as it was now late, of course she must remain in Portsmouth for the night.

Will, with his convoy in tow and child in his arms, followed by a man carrying the widow's luggage, marched off for his old lodgings at first; but then the thought struck him that he would not choose his wife that was to be, to remain in the same house with questionable characters and groggy seamen, and so he stopped suddenly at a small but clean looking house of entertainment, and made arrangements for a night's lodging, and glad enough was he to get his new friends housed, for along a great portion of their line of march some very queer jokes at his expense were indulged in by liberty-men, and several times Master Jarvis felt savage; but for the child in his arms he would quickly have slipped into some of his

tormentors *vi et armis*. As it was, he made no reply, but strode on, looking like a heavily charged thundercloud, jumping the baby when it cried, and making it suck barley-sugar, which he had purchased for the purpose.

The mother soon walked off to bed with her child, and Will was left to his ruminations.

“Well, I’m blessed if I ain’t taken in and done for at last; got a widow and a ready-made baby too; d—n me, I’ll take mother’s advice, and turn over a new leaf; it’s more respectable, and I shall stand a better chance of having a warrant; so here’s off to a splice and luck.” He finished his grog, and turned in.

Mr. Overdon and Harold put up at the George for the night, but first visited old Shirley, the Port Admiral, to whom Sir Jeremy Diddler had given them a letter of introduction. This old gentleman expressed himself as much astonished when he heard that Harold had been appointed to the ‘Brilliant,’ because she was a sort of refuge for the destitute, and, with the Squire’s interest, something better should have been obtained.

Overdon took him on one side, and whispered his particular desire, and his reasons. Admiral Shirley did not much like to hear his profes-

sion run down ; however, he shrugged his shoulders and put it down to eccentricity, just remarking that the 'Brilliant' would sail in the course of the day following, and so the youngster had better be on board, and report himself in time. Then remembering the note he still held in his hand, he added :

"By-the-by, I shall go on board myself to-morrow morning at ten. You can both have a seat in my barge, if you please."

Of course both did please, and after some conversation of a general character, the two Overdons left, and returned to the George,—the elder one much chafed at the *hauteur* of men in power, and cudgelling himself for having, in a moment of weakness, given his boy permission to choose for himself a profession.

When they rose in the morning, the Squire drew his blind, and the first man he saw was Schneider, in his uniform, hurrying away down to the landing-place. He had come down by the night-coach. The sight of this man irritated him beyond measure, and his only consolation was that Harold would soon get disgusted, and retire from the service.

Ten o'clock arrived, and, punctual to a second, old Shirley embarked, and they pulled out for the 'Brilliant.' As they neared her, the

hateful features of Schneider became apparent. He appeared astonished at first, and then rubbed his hands with satisfaction, at the idea, doubtless, of having Harold in his power. Old Boodle was there too; much astonished at seeing a midy coming to join his ship in the Port Admiral's barge, and he thought things were looking up. But the Admiral had with him a large official looking parcel. That parcel contained something that was to give him (Boodle) a good deal of trouble. However, that he didn't then know, and so gave way to satisfaction at the idea of the honour done him in a visit from the great man, who was received on board with tremendous ceremony, and immediately took Boodle below, in order to give him his instructions and the parcel, after which he said:

"By-the-by, I have brought a youngster on board to join you. The gentleman with him is his father, who naturally enough was anxious to see his son safe in his new home."

"I am sure, sir, he ought to feel himself highly honoured in being so distinguished as to come on board in your barge. Why, I myself would give—"

The Admiral checked him.

"Never mind, sir, what you would give.

This young gentleman happens to be nearly related to Sir Jeremy Diddler, and from that hint you will probably take your cue."

Boodle was only a commander, and greatly coveted Post rank—here was a chance for him to ensure it, by cultivating this youngster; he really felt almost ready to go on deck and touch his hat to him. He had always found the want of powerful relations and friends, and so was very much inclined to rail at the good fortune of others.

It is all very fine for a man who happens himself to be on the wrong side of the hedge, to swell with virtuous indignation at the manner in which his services are overlooked and those of others handsomely rewarded. Turn the tables; put the railer in power, by George, you would be astonished—rather—to see the quantity of mushrooms springing up in a night. Let matters rest as they are at present. Do not attempt to undermine the powers at present existing. Capsize the present Government if you like, and let us have the Tories, but stick to the aristocracy as close as wax.

Out of consideration to the feelings of the father and son, they were invited below, and left to themselves, in order that their parting might be in private—the Port Admiral and

Commander paced the brig's short raised quarter-deck—this really was doing Mr. Overdon an act of kindness that cost a great deal on the part of old Shirley; he had a most profound contempt for Boodle, and that feeling, we believe, was pretty general throughout the service. When the 'Brilliant' was reported by the look-outs on board any of the ships cruising in the Channel as being in sight, all was at once activity to keep out of her way—she was shunned as though the plague raged on board of her. If the Squire had been a little more worldly-wise, and listened to reason, he would have shunned her too; but, unfortunately, in common with very many others of his class and genus, he was as stubborn as a confounded mule; and to try and turn him when he had once made up his mind to anything, however absurd, was about as profitable an employment as whistling jigs to a milestone with a view to making it dance.

The parting was over. Mr. Overdon and Admiral Shirley passed over the side, and the barge pulled away for the shore; the anchor of the brig was run up to the bows, she payed off, and soon had way on her. Harold was now afloat in earnest, and so had his desires gratified.

CHAPTER V.

PARTING for the first time is not particularly agreeable; fortunately, however, the spirits of the young are somewhat elastic, and soon recover their proper balance. Anxieties and regrets did not last long with Harold; the novelty of the scene as the brig left the land astern of her—the freshness of the sea breeze—the bustle of the seamen—gradually mellowed them away, and by the time land was no longer in view, all traces of despondency had given way to the natural buoyancy of spirits and expectancy of hope. He was himself very sanguine, and had now embarked among the joyous and reckless, who, with a far better acquaintance with the ways of the world, appeared to know no care, and so Harold, following such bright examples, soon ceased to regret leaving the paternal mansion.

Now it so happened that on this occasion the 'Brilliant' was to return to her old cruising ground, but to fulfil more perilous instructions than hitherto—the parcel that we have men-

tioned contained a quantity of proclamations which were to be distributed along the French coast, inviting the population to rise against their ruler, and making fulsome promises of assistance and protection to them for so doing. All may be fair, as they say, in love and war, but this appears to us as anything but the correct thing; the French people, it must be understood, were wished and strongly advised, for their own well-being, to throw off the yoke of the usurper, and return to their allegiance of the old rulers. Boodle was just the man for such a job; he was quite ready and willing to go through any amount of mud in order to gain his own ends, and it must really be said in his favour, that he would have stuck at nothing; it would not have entered into his cranium to calculate any chances of personal risk and positive danger—he would have attempted any mortal thing, even to going up the Seine in his old brig, with a faint hope of taking Paris, provided always that he could see his step ahead; this object he kept constantly in view, and worked hard for it—perhaps he deserved it.

We have said that he did not attempt to shelter himself from danger. Of course the most simple manner of executing the orders

under which he was presently acting would have been through his old friends, the fishermen; but no, he did not so read his instructions, and to them he was determined most literally to stick. His superiors wanted to get round the military more particularly, and therefore the fishermen were not his game; they must be distributed among the numerous guard-houses, and although the Duke of Wellington had not then said it, yet Boodle quite agreed with that illustrious hero in thinking, "that if you want a thing done properly, you must do it yourself," and determined in doing this little bit of business himself. He called Mr. Schneider, and communicated to him as much as it was at all necessary for him to know, and very shortly afterwards Master Harold (with whom the first luff had changed tactics since he heard of the little relationship to the First Lord) heard all about it, and was extremely anxious in the event of a youngster being required, to be the youngster, as he, too, had an object which he intended to keep steadily in view, and that was to become a great man.

Day followed day as usual, and night succeeded night, but for the Channel at that season of the year the atmosphere remained

marvellously, we may say, under the circumstances, provokingly clear, and the poor commander chafed and fretted at a great rate, but you know we wouldn't alter matters probably, if we could; then we needn't stew about it, because we couldn't if we would. There's nothing comes up to philosophy.

At length when he had almost fretted himself into a fever, an opportunity presented itself. Night came on gloriously thick, and the 'Brilliant,' under cover of the dense atmosphere, ran in pretty close. Boodle gave Schneider his last instructions, directing him to stand off again for four hours, and stand in during the morning in order that the people might see the vessel; then, if practicable, manage to beat up as long as he thought the vessel in sight, as though bound up Channel, then when he was safe so far, shove her nose the other way, and run down the following night to a given point of the coast at a particular time and send a boat in shore for them.

Having run in far enough, the Commander, with Harold carrying the mysterious parcel, were landed about a league to the northward of Calais, and then began their new trade of bill sticking under cover of the darkness, each being pretty fairly disguised in a blouse and

peculiar hat. Our friend Boodle would much rather have landed in full fig, epaulettes and all, but permitted himself to be overruled by Schneider, who happened to be right in this instance, for it would have been madness, but then Schneider was a detestable coward, and could no more have summoned pluck to do the work himself, even disguised in a blouse, than he could have flown in the air, and so had tried to dissuade Harold, but that was all no go, the boy had good rich blood in his veins, he was thorough-bred to the backbone, and so he disregarded all hints and went.

Batteries on the heights were about as plentiful as blackberries, but Boodle knew every inch of his ground, and so was perfectly well posted up how to steer so as to avoid any very serious *contretemps*; nevertheless, it was rather beyond a joke, this little nocturnal excursion.

Fortunately for them they found that the sentinels were not so sharp as they might be, lulled into a state of false security, always attended with danger during periods of hostility, and so with a great deal of care and good management, they positively fixed one of these odious proclamations on each sentry house, the very guard-houses were not spared, but all garnished with them, and in many places

the muzzles of the guns even were not respected.

There was pretty hullabulloo in the morning—that an enemy had been there was almost beyond a doubt, and yet there was the bare possibility of treason among the troops; each man accordingly looked at his neighbour with suspicion, and perhaps many thought that the great Enemy of mankind had been among them—so they resorted to the infallible charm against all evil spirits, and everything else, crossed themselves and told their beads. This idea gained ground very rapidly, and yet they did not forget to make every effort to catch the spy, if there really should be one of mortal mould in the case at all. Scouts were sent out, and the country was scoured in all directions, or at least orders to that effect were given—and most assuredly, if those orders had been obeyed and carried into execution successfully, a capture would have ensured the captives an elevation far above their fellows, for hanged they certainly would have been (our story would then have been at an end). Boodle was perfectly aware of this, but considered a hempen cravat rather an unnecessary ornament for his bull neck, to say nothing of sundry other trifling and very natural personal objections to such a summary proceeding, so

he and his midshipman had kept on the march, and that pretty rapid all the time, and had thus succeeded in distancing their pursuers. Boodle had well calculated in ordering his lieutenant to stand up Channel—the people on shore had observed what seemed to them a large ship apparently bound up, under a press of canvas, and so very naturally took that to be a sign that one of her people had done the deed, and made off under cover of darkness, but how this had been managed was a puzzler, and brought the sentries into hot water.

Having padded the hoof all night and all next day, with very few stoppages, our friends arrived at the outskirts of the town of — (it will not do to be too explicit even now), and marched through the principal streets, posting their proclamations in every available nook and corner, positively having the hardihood to label the mansion of the Prefect, the guard-boxes again came in for their whack, until at last their stock was used up, and the parcel empty; then nothing remained but to get back to their ship, but somehow or another this was easier said than done. Johnny Crapeaud got sharper and wider awake as the insult became more stinging in this town; possibly none would have known anything about it until morning, but unfortunately the Prefect

happened to be away from home at the time, in fact, at Calais, and returned shortly after the prefecture had been garnished; the odious proclamation soon caught the little chap's eyes, and furious indeed was he. The guard soon turned out, and the town was all in commotion; the process of scouring the country was again resorted to, all classes joining in the hunt. Death and destruction they threatened to those who had had the temerity to endeavour to trifle with their honour.

As we have said, Boodle, poor fellow, was possessed of a short neck, and happened to be very short-winded; so situated he could not manage to keep up any longer—and when we come to consider that for four-and-twenty hours he had been on the trot, we cannot wonder at his singing out *peccavi*; as for poor Harold he was dead beat, but the natural pluck of the boy had kept him going. Glad enough however was he to obey signals, and never was one more quickly and joyfully obeyed than that of his superior's to sit down; they sat down to rest, and gradually their forms reclined more and more—a few nods of the head, and they were both off in a sound sleep, and this almost within the precincts of the town. They were very soon spied out by a party of the

enemy, and quickly surrounded by soldiers and furious fishermen and women, who soon broke in upon their rest, and managed to rouse their scattered senses into something like a state to consider their remarkably pleasant situation. Poor Boodle began to feel an unpleasant sensation about his throat, but had the generosity to plead for the middy, on account of his youth—we like him for that—it covers a great deal.

The people claimed and managed to make good their claim to the prisoners, and so the soldiers gradually filed off, leaving them secure in the hands of an infuriate mob. Of this mob, the great majority were fish people, and these in their turn got possession—the rest, perfectly satisfied that justice would be done, and their terrible sentence carried immediately into effect, in their turn quietly topped their booms, so that Boodle with Harold was left with old acquaintances, but unfortunately those acquaintances appeared furious against them, and so he had no hope for mercy, more especially as he had too much pluck to stain his cloth by asking it.

The captors handled their prisoners very roughly, driving them before them like sheep to the slaughter through the town, more especially in passing the different pickets—the soldiers took the bait, thought it was all right; the prisoners could not be in better hands, and

made sure that punishment well merited certainly would be summary. Down through the town to the port these apparently enraged people drove their prisoners, and now being out of sight of troops, and among their own class of people, they hurried them down to a boat, and a big brawny fellow spoke up, as follows : —“ *Les troupes descendent la colline, le moment de nous séparer est venu—dépechez-vous—allez, allez. Dieu vous protège.* ”

Boodle was flabbergasted, could scarcely credit his senses; here was luck indeed—the change from despair to hope was too much for him, so all he could manage to do was to embrace a few of the women, and shake hands heartily with some of the men, while Harold was hugged and kissed at a great rate.

On the point of embarking, yet not out of danger, a soldier rushed through the mob, but his impetus was so great that he fell down to the bottom of the boat, musket and all; to make him fast there was to Boodle the work of a moment; then off they went like lightning; luckily the tide favoured and swept them off cheerily. Suddenly the sound of oars came over the waters, and soon the regular stroke of a man-of-war's boat greeted their ears; then the challenge from the officer, quickly and joyfully answered by the commander, for that was old

Boodle's boat pulling in for the rendezvous; and glad, by George, how glad, were the amateur bill-stickers to stick their toes in the cleets as they ascended the side of the 'Brilliant,' once more safe and sound. Harold had reason to be jolly, for his bull-necked superior had announced his intention of making most favourable mention of him in his report to headquarters, after he had made a most complimentary speech to the youngster, somewhat fulsome possibly on account of his powerful connections. However, Harold felt jolly; he had ascended one spoke of the ladder, and was well on his road for becoming "a great man."

Schneider, the first lieutenant, was very much disgusted at their safe return, he had hoped for grief to them, then he could have popped into Boodle's shoes for the present cruise at all events. And yet he wished Harold to be saved, because through him he hoped to get his promotion. Most annoying in more ways than one was Boodle's safe return to his lieutenant, for Schneider was even as many other men are, and being so had taken the opportunity of his commander's absence to poison the minds of others against him, speaking of him too in the past tense, yet managing to put in a few "poor fellows," and so on, in order the better to cover

some of his rascality; for however bad Boodle might be, he was immensely superior in every way to Schneider, who was everything that can be bad, with few redeeming qualities; his superior's absence on an expedition from which a safe return appeared impossible, had just shown out in bright colours a pretty little trait in his character. Without just cause he was angry, and had fed the flame until envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness took deep root in his heart, and he sought the opportunity to destroy the reputation of the object of his hatred when he thought he could do it with safety to himself. As a matter of course he most carefully withheld the good points in Boodle's character, and as carefully magnified the evil.

Scandal may be the very life and soul of conversation, and we may be wrong in not cultivating a feeling of deep gratitude toward those very obliging people who so very aptly tack on a "*but*" to the finale of their encomiums on others. "He is a good fellow enough, *but*," said Schneider, and that little unintelligible word "*but*," followed by a certain expression on his sinister countenance, would have been almost sufficient to shake your faith even in the Archangel Michael.

CHAPTER VI.

WE left Will Jarvis in rather a shabby manner, although comfortable enough between the sheets, and now purpose taking him in tow once more, as we are fond of settling our characters happily, and moreover are inclined to give our readers a short account of what passed at a sailor's wedding a century ago.

In the first place it was necessary for Jarvis to apply for an extension of his liberty, the stipulated time having expired; so he sallied forth betimes in the morning, and was fortunate enough to fall in with his Captain, the Honourable Driver-Throughit, in company with a whole fleet of the fair sex, evidently under weigh for a day's pleasure somewhere or other. Will marched straight up, brought himself round handsomely with a man-of-war's sweep, and when fairly alongside removed his hat from his head, thus displaying to the admiring ladies as bonny a curly head as you would wish to see, to say nothing of a remarkably pleasing physiognomy beneath it.

"Want an extension of leave to get spliced ! No, certainly not ; why if you splice you're d—d."

The honourable Captain paused in time—never mind what he was going to say—the ladies took the case in hand, and one beauty exclaimed :

"How exceedingly cruel of you, Driver"—this was aloud ; then, in a lower tone, "Suppose my papa should some day refuse you a similar boon, you would not like it, neither should I ; the poor have feelings as well as the rich, therefore let him go and splice as he calls it ; depend upon it he will not be the worse seaman for the indulgence."

The Captain smiled affectionately upon her, and granted her request instantly, then turned to Jarvis—"Now, look here, my man, if I allow you to go and do as you wish, recollect I am stretching a point ; let your future conduct while under my pendant be such as to convince me that matrimony enhances rather than depreciates the value of a seaman—be off with you !"

Will tugged hard at one of his curls, turned to the young lady, and said :

"Bless your pretty ladyship, and many thanks—one good turn deserves another—I'll look after the Captain when we goes away ; no harm

sha'nt come to 'en if Will Jarvis can help it, and from this time one arm is for the King and t'other for him."

With an awkward bow Master Will sheered off, and made sail down street, happy as a prince.

He paid the reckoning, and got his convoy under weigh for Wimmering in a one-horse chaise; the widow laughed merrily, the baby crowed, and all were in high spirits as they jogged along. Mrs. Jarvis was delighted when on their arrival Will told his mother as how he'd picked up a prize, and intended to stick to her. She was a lone woman, and when Will was at sea, found with increasing years an increasing yearning for company—in fact, as she very justly observed, "life's very uncertain, and I might be took bad at any time, and go off without anybody being the wiser; Will's made me a happy woman now, my dear, and I hope we shall manage to jog along comfortably."

The widow saw no just cause or impediment why they should not. She had a nice little snug bit of money tied up carefully in a pair of stockings. Mrs. Jarvis had more than she cared people to know of; her husband had been a decent tradesman at Portsmouth, and managed during thirty years' slavery to save a few hundreds; the cottage she lived in be-

longed to her, and so did one or two others in the village. Will, too, had been very successful in prize money, and, unlike most of his kidney, had managed to save up; so altogether they were promised a very fair start in the world.

Will got very impatient at the time which must elapse before he could splice; however, he managed to get on pretty well; and a journey they had to make to the young widow's home in order to sell off everything they did not want, and get rid of the house, made a great hole in the time, and so the auspicious day was close upon them before they were aware of it. Will determined to have none but respectable people at his wedding, and so the postmaster, the grocer, the master mason, the carpenter, and the blacksmith, together with three of his chums from Portsmouth, formed the sum total—all people well-to-do in the world, and, to a certain extent, *comme il faut*.

A merry party they trudged to church—the day being kept as a sort of holiday in the place, and several “union-jacks” displayed in honour of the event; the boys and girls shouted, dogs barked, and altogether this wedding was a thing to be remembered. On the return from church, of course, like their

betters, they must have something extra spicy in the shape of a dinner, and before they sat down Will's mother informed her daughter-in-law of the customs of the place, and recommended her not to tie her garters too tight, because it was the duty of the bachelor who acted as Will's best man, to take possession of them from her legs, and distribute them in pieces to the company as a *souvenir*. The dinner was ordered at the crack inn of the village, the "Bell and Crown," and thither the procession wended its way; and very soon all hands were busily employed discussing the good cheer provided for them; nothing could be done without a fiddle, and so accordingly a fiddler was there, who performed a selection of music during the repast.

The noise of this villanous fiddle of course rendered it impossible for a voice to be heard unless elevated at a considerable pitch; so as the strong ale and grog began to operate, in proportion did the row increase—coarse jests and witticisms were indulged in, and, finally, the best man at the wedding—the dapper little grocer—dived suddenly under the table, with a view to possess himself of the bride's garters, but the grog had proved rather too much for him, and accordingly instead of handily man-

aging this little ceremony without offence, he must needs tug and tug away until eventually he tugged the bride off her chair, and he almost disappeared beneath her petticoats.

This little episode almost capsized Will; he did not much relish the joke, and very probably the little grocer did not know how very narrowly he escaped with a sound skin. Jack is ever ready for a row, and at the least hint from Jarvis, his brother tars would very quickly have cleared the course. Fortunately the postmaster had great weight with them all; he explained the matter satisfactorily, and at last all settled down fair and smooth once more. The tables were cleared away, and dancing became the order of the day. The tradesmen's wives of course were rigged out in their best, and really looked remarkably fresh and nice. Sailors are fond of a joke, and so when the husbands retired for a short time to do their yard of clay and blow a cloud, Jack remained and did the amiable to the ladies. Well, Jarvis and his new wife were too busy to think of any but themselves; why should they on their wedding day? The little cherub, now their joint property, had been brought in, and the two were discussing his future career, she wishing that he might turn out a handsome sailor, and all this

while they remained perfectly in the dark respecting the movements of their friends, until suddenly the door was pushed violently open, and in rushed the tradesmen, looking furious. Some hint had been given them that it was time for them to appear, and there they stood with their eyes shining like a cat's in the dark, blows were struck, collars were seized, and very soon Harmony was dethroned by Discord.

Strong ale and grog had got into all their heads, the coarsest of coarse jests had been passed and received with row enough to crack all the windows; in fact, it was a continual running fire of broad witticisms that admitted of no double meaning whatever, because all was so unmistakably detailed. No wonder, then, that the sailors took advantage of such a fine opportunity to form a closer acquaintance with their neighbours, more especially as those neighbours appeared nothing loath. So they addressed themselves in earnest to their task, and the women took their jokes and advances in good part (they were fond of laughing). All would have ended harmlessly enough, but for the sudden appearance of their worse halves. Then came the attack, that settled the business; the wives endeavoured to part the combatants, and so pushed down their husbands, who pulled the

women on top of them. The sailors wanted to get at their assailants, and so got tumbling over the wives. This at all events will pass muster as a reason, and on these occasions we must not examine too closely.

Jarvis managed to get his bride and her child out of the room, and then set to work in real earnest, getting all on their pins again. This was a difficult job, inasmuch as the tradesmen, being at the bottom of all, were the only ones anxious to be released, neither the tradesmen's wives nor the sailors cared much about it. However, after much kicking and spluttering, laughing and swearing, they all permitted Jarvis to help raise them, and then the postmaster, a fellow about the size of a hogshead, and jolly withal, swore that it was a capital joke, and laughed heartily; his satellites did not quite see the affair by the same light, but being in the minority made a virtue of necessity, and joined chorus, thereby removing all unpleasantness.

It being now dusk, lights were brought into the big room of the inn, the young men and maidens of the village, all rigged out in Sunday clothes, poured in to dance at Will's wedding. The bride having been home and put her child to bed, and left him in good hands, returned, and she and Will opened the ball, according to

the fashion of the place. Dancing was kept up to a late hour; then Will took his wife's hand, and passed out, escorted home by the whole company, who were very anxious to put the bride to bed. However, that was overruled, and all remained outside, surrounding the newly married pair until Jarvis threw up his bedroom window, then the bride appeared at it with her stockings, which she threw down among them; then there was a loud burst of applause. The villagers cheered. The bedroom window was closed, the blind pulled down, and so ended Will Jarvis's wedding, or at least all we have to do with the matter.

CHAPTER VII.

You remember the French soldier who embarked so unceremoniously with our friends in the little fishing-boat. Well, when Boodle's boat ranged up alongside of her, instead of leaving him adrift as they did the little craft. Monsieur was carefully transferred, or transhipped if you prefer the term, and conveyed on board the 'Brilliant.'

Next morning Schneider appeared in the Commander's cabin pretty early, and wished to know what he was to do with him. Boodle had forgotten the circumstance.

"How far are we off land, Mr. Schneider?" he inquired.

"About six miles, sir," was the reply.

"Very well," said Boodle, "shove her nose in, Mr. Schneider, and by the time you have sufficiently lessened the distance, I shall be on deck."

Accordingly, the brig's nose was shoved the other way, and she stood in towards land on an easy bow line, with about a three-knot breeze.

When the Commander did come on deck, four of the miles had been bowled off, and he considered himself almost near enough. However, a certain feeling of humanity prompted him to hold on yet awhile, so he still stood in, but at length "rounded to," and directed the French soldier to be brought before him, and the poor fellow was brought shivering and shaking like a Lascar on a frosty morning, he being in an awful state of uncertainty as to the fate reserved for him. The dialogue between them, held on Boodle's part in villanous French, was about as follows—

"You must be aware, my man, that a French soldier on board an English man-of-war is most decidedly out of place; that little fact cannot have failed to impress itself upon your memory, and it is unnecessary for me to call your attention to the long list of punishments it is in my power to inflict upon you. Now, although it is my very painful duty to regard all the enemies of his most gracious Majesty as my own personal enemies, yet, considering all things, I am induced to be most lenient with you, therefore I give you your liberty, but, inasmuch as it is impossible for me to send you on shore in the style I could wish, it becomes necessary for me to inquire if you can swim?"

"*Mais oui, monsieur, oui, oui, oui,*" answered the Frenchman, deucedly glad to get off on such easy terms as the question seemed to imply.

"Very well, my man, then you are at liberty to try your luck."

The Commander beckoned to one or two brawny seamen, gave them their orders, and away went the soldier overboard, musket and all. When he rose to the surface, he struck out manfully, and long before the brig had a good offing, Boodle had the satisfaction through his glass, of seeing the poor devil picked up by a fishing-boat, safe and sound, but somewhat moist.

Time passed, the 'Brilliant' kept her position, hoping to gather some favourable fruit from the proclamation, until her perseverance became rather annoying to sundry of the people ashore; their contraband trade was almost at a standstill, and it became necessary to get her (the sloop) out of the way; nothing could be more easily managed. A wary, wide-awake old fisherman stood out, and, as a matter of course, was overhauled. The old fellow was brought on board according to custom, and pumped—his news seemed to Boodle important.

"At a certain given point an officer of high rank in the French army was on the eve of embarking in a trading vessel bound to Hull, with

orders to keep his eyes open to spy the nakedness of the land."

This information was given with such apparent reluctance, that Boodle eagerly swallowed the bait, altered his course, packed sail on the brig, and as he paced his little bit of deck, wondered how the bigwigs at the Admiralty could overlook a man of his transcendant abilities and professional value. Then he could not see the thumb of the Frenchmen put to their noses and the four fingers extended at him as they (to use a street boy's expression) "made bacon;" not he, and well that it was so, he would have died in a fit to a certainty, and that straightway, *instantly*.

He arrived off the point indicated just after dusk, sent for Harold, and told him,—“How much pleased he had been with him on their bill-sticking expedition—that he had manifested great ability, very praiseworthy zeal and assiduity—that, taking all this into consideration, he was about to confer upon him great distinction by giving him the command of a boat on a very particular service.” Then, of course, followed a long rigmarole of instructions, of which a fair moiety was forgotten by the boy before he quitted his superior—in a few words the orders might have been given,—“Keep a

sharp look-out, and at the least indication of what we have reason to suspect coming to pass, immediately notify the same to me by given signal."

However, Harold got his instructions; he was proud of his command—a fine boat, six prime seamen, and a couple of jollies, all well armed: here, then, in his idea, was another step in the ladder of fame; his was far from being a comfortable billet though, as he soon found out—in fact, no sooner had he swung over the brig's side to get into his boat, than he felt almost inclined to give up fame, and allow somebody else to reap the full benefit of the distinguished honour—the men in the boat had enough to do to fend her off the ship's side as she rose and fell some five or six feet; pride came to the boy's rescue—he caused his painter to be cast adrift, and then with muffled oars pulled in shore, leaving the old 'Brilliant' curtsying and curvetting gracefully enough, as if bowing respectfully to the swell which was coming in to the Channel. After about an hour and a half's hard pull, the land rose upon them, dark, gloomy, and forbidding enough—not even a blessed light to relieve its sombre appearance.

Well, on arriving at what Master Harold

considered his cruising ground, as a matter of course he did keep a bright look-out, that is as bright a look-out as he could keep, considering that even the man pulling the stroke-oar was to him invisible ; then they occasionally lay on their oars while he listened to catch any sound of flapping canvas, or even the rippling of water under a vessel's bows ; but, bless you, his teeth chattered so confoundedly, that nothing else was to be heard by him, and as to his men, most likely they were similarly situated, for any man who has been employed on similar duty, must be perfectly aware that the nights in our Channel are deucedly cold, even on board ship with a certain amount of comforts round you ; how much more so must it be in an open boat ? To add immensely to their delectation on this particular night and morning, rain descended upon them in torrents, and so their situation was rendered remarkably unpleasant, not to say particularly disagreeable. In that boat the language they made use of (to explain their position and feelings on the matter) was very, very strong indeed. They pulled and pulled, laid on their oars, and listened, until, combined with the darkness of the night, and the blinding, driving rain and sleet, they became very dubious as to a know-

ledge of their whereabouts; this perhaps was a good job, because when difficulties are put in Jack's way, he forgets petty inconveniences and troubles, and struggles hard to overcome those difficulties; and, to cheer them a little more, the moon was at her last quarter (better than none at all)—she rose—then a solitary star, alternately with the horny moon, presented itself to their vision, and gleamed through the heavy clouds that drove at headlong speed athwart the sky; but then, on the other hand, a heavy ground-swell set in, which appeared to indicate something not to be desired; as approaching; they began to find that old Ocean was anxious to have them, some of his many retainers, in their anxiety, actually leapt into the boat, as though desirous of anticipating events by filling her; but Harold had plenty of pluck; his spirits rose as dangers thickened, and almost as fast as they came on board, these intruders were baled out with his hat; when he found they gained on him, he set the two marines to work—what marines take in hand they do well, and so they managed to keep her pretty dry, considering.

“Lay in that bow oar, and keep a sharp look-out forward, Mason; we don't know where we are going now.”

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the seaman, cheerfully, "but, bless your heart, it ain't no use; I can't see nothing."

And so the boat continued to rise slowly over the swell, as they pulled gently along with muffled oars. Those favoured by a kind Providence, and permitted only to participate quietly in the joys of the happy fireside, surrounded by a united family, or accustomed to the noisy but cheerful bustle of the mighty city, as they pursue their daily labours, cannot realize the grandeur of the stormy wave, or expect to understand properly the feelings of awe inspired in the breasts of that little handful of men commanded by a mere boy that night, as they pursued their solitary course close to the hostile shore; these men were happy and content to all appearance—at all events, not a murmur escaped their lips; what they endured their officer shared with them—all fared alike; each stood an equal chance for life or death. All were shortly roused by a great shock—the boat was aground—now came the time for the officer to show of what materials he was composed; our friend Harold was not found wanting—he still sat as quietly as though in the drawing-room at Overdon.

"Forward there, Mason; what's the matter?"

—can you see anything?" shouted he, but perfectly coolly.

"Mighty little, sir," was the reply; "just a wee bit of a rock under the boat's bow, that's all, sir."

"Can you make out anything ahead?"

"Nothing but darkness, sir."

"Very good; is there footing for you on the rock; if so, just give us a shove-off. Back off all, men."

Men like to find a cool customer in their officer; these fellows had one cool enough, and they took their cue—consequently all was well. Fortunately, the rock was smooth with the constant wash—had no angular points, which might have been awkward, and so, where a youngster without nerve would have managed to drown at least half his crew, Master Harold pulled his through harmless (in spite of a heavy ground-swell), the only inconvenience being an additional weight of water on board, and Mason had his sea-boots full of the same element—a mere trifle when you are used to it. Harold now made up his mind to pull out, and get a good offing—he soon expected daybreak, and his watch would then have expired; accordingly they pulled out, and soon found that it blew mighty fresh, but then the sea ran clearer as

they progressed, not in such a confounded wabble as it did in shore, among rocks and sand-banks. That to them interminable night at length came to an end, and daylight showed them the brig under easy canvas a league or so on their weather gauge. Those on board the brig had also made them out, for she made sail and stood towards them. Not at all sorry, we can assure you, was Harold, to see the tackles hooked on, and the boat run up—glad enough, too, was Boodle to have them on board safe and sound. Ever since they left he had been in a stew, which increased as the night began to look dirty; through all the hours in the night he had been either pacing his cabin or his deck, swearing to himself that the French officer might embark, run across to England, and be damned to him, before he'd send away a relative of the First Lord again on such an errand; besides, just privately in his own mind, this redoubtable commander really began now to consider that his having been weathered on this tack was, after all, very possible; he took into consideration that if an officer really did intend to make the trip for the object stated, the most likely point of departure would be the very one whence he had started on the day preceding; if so, he was done brown—not that this was

anything particularly new, but then if Harold should take it into his head to be very communicative when he got back, possibly, nay, probably, the Port-Admiral would lay hold of this little circumstance as a handle whereby to hoist Boodle out of his command, in lieu of congratulating him on his promotion; so he was mighty civil—unbecomingly so—appeared very anxious that Overdon should not take cold—suggested to him paternally the propriety of changing his clothes for those dry and warm, and concluded by soliciting the honour of his company to breakfast. As soon as Harold got clear of his commander, Mr. Schneider stalked up, himself very anxious to make a friend, stanch and true, of him, and tried to get him down to his little dungeon of a berth:—"A little drop of rum would be such a nice thing for him after having passed such a night in an open boat by the order (cruel, he must say,) of Captain Boodle; however, you know, Mr. Overdon, we cannot expect much from *poor* Captain Boodle; he rose from nothing, you know—came in through the hawse-holes—of course we who come through the cabin windows, who step on the quarter-deck at once, know well how to manage these things; we employ on disagreeable duties only those who

are without interest or rank, even as on a frosty night we should proceed to a rout in a hackney coach, rather than have out our thoroughbreds." And with twaddle Schneider would have run on till Doomsday, but he perceived that Harold was wet and cold; his teeth chattered; the kind offer of rum was declined, and our friend proceeded to change, while the first lieutenant dived down below for a moment, then came on deck with a deeper tinge of colour on his nose, and forthwith commenced bullying the men.

CHAPTER VIII.

Now, kind reader, we purpose dedicating this chapter to a subject which lays very close up to our heart. You may not appreciate it, and therefore have full permission to skip if it pleases you so to do; at all events it will not affect the narrative. Having so far explained, we will immediately proceed to discuss this little matter in this particular place, because the reader must fall upon it. An introduction or preface is often skipped, but in the middle of a yarn it appears to us that there is a better chance of a certain amount of attention being given to it.

We would commence with an assertion, such an one as few will be inclined to cavil at: "England can only exist as a power of the first class." Her insular position renders an enormous naval force positively necessary, and yet we find that her rulers are disposed to trust entirely to what has passed and gone. The Nile and Trafalgar most assuredly added immensely to her reputation, yet must we not permit ourselves to be blinded by the smoke of

those battles. She must not be suffered to exist in her rank on sufferance—her existence must be in her unmistakable superiority upon the seas.

At present England's naval power (in spite of what may be said from time to time in after-dinner or parliamentary speeches), taken at the outside possible extent, pushed to the utmost, is just sufficient to serve as a protection to herself and hers. That little fact is enough to account for the quiet manner in which she suffers weighty European questions to be settled often against her better judgment, with but a very very feeble remonstrance. That is not the way in which she gained for herself such a great and terrible name; it is not the way to preserve intact her spotless reputation. Has not the Italian business opened the eyes of the people of this country? Let them turn their eyes thitherward and what will they see? Something that they would not have seen in the days of "Boodle" and "Woodburn"—look at *Gaeta*!

In the case of Italy, England, through her Ministers, proclaimed non-intervention. Very good; yet that might not have been a century since. France, through her Emperor, also shouted non-intervention, but the Frenchman does not stick to his text; a French fleet

appears off Gaeta, where Bomba lays like a rat in his hole. What, then, is the object of their presence, since non-intervention is the order of the day? And why does not England step forward, send her fleet also to the same point, and keep the arena clear for those who have quarrelled to fight it out? France, through her Emperor, wishes to give a moral influence to the King of Naples, and hopes to discomfort his enemies. The Emperor of France knows perfectly well that England dare not interfere with him; that what a century since we could have done as easily as we brush a speck of dirt off our clothes we cannot do to-day; and so what his uncle dare not have done he can do with impunity, and does do, to our utter consternation. That man has power that his uncle never possessed, and yet he carefully follows in the footsteps of his uncle. Surely then it is time for us to wake out of our sleep. We are no alarmist. No. We inveigh bitterly against the disgraceful cowardice and debasing influence of "Panic." We glory in the spirit which has raised a body of brave men available for the protection of our country; but we wish their numbers trebled, ay, quadrupled, as easily might be managed.

Our navy is the sticking point, and there we

are most disgracefully behindhand; and this is a question on which the voice of the nation must be heard. Our army, to the best of our knowledge and belief, is as it should be (the Commander-in-Chief has worked many salutary reforms which bear good fruit); our volunteers are making rapid strides in excellence, astonishing those well calculated to form impartial judgment of them, by their precision and aptitude for military manœuvres. Our arms and weapons of war are universally acknowledged to be superior to all others; and yet, with all this the First Service in the nation, its mainstay, is disgracefully behindhand. There is an immense falling off, even within the memory of men not yet to be considered old, in its strength; and which renders our supremacy on the seas extremely doubtful. For instance: What was the actual state of our fleet in 1817, and what is it now? Why, in 1857, according to the statement of the then First Lord, it stood as follows:

SHIPS OF THE LINE.

English.	French.
In 1817—131 . . .	72
„ 1840— 89 . . .	46
1857— 42 Screw .	40 Screw.

FRIGATES.

English.	French.
In 1817—192 . . .	46
„ 1840—110 . . .	91
„ 1857— 42 Screw .	37 Screw.

Earl St. Vincent had under his command in the Mediterranean a naval force the most formidable this or any other nation ever possessed in any quarter of the globe, amounting in ships of the line alone to no less than fifty-two sail. Comparisons are said to be odious, otherwise we might compare our past with our present Mediterranean fleet; with what a result! In that sea alone there is already an overbearing display which should cause us to hide our diminished heads. Plain facts in plain figures render contemptible sophistry of no avail. By carrying out those figures it will be found that in 1817 we had 323 ships-of-war, liners and frigates; in 1857 only 84; while in corresponding years the French possessed 118 and 77 respectively; so that, whereas in 1817 we had 205, in 1857 we had only 7 ships more than they. Surely such a state of affairs is somewhat startling; there must have existed in certain quarters an awful amount of culpable negligence and apathy, to give it no harsher name.

At this moment we have not command of the

Mediterranean. Heaven only knows if even the Channel is still our own. In fact, we exist at present as a first-class power simply on sufferance. Why should this be? Nay, it really must not be. Britons yet have indignation enough to sweep away venal abominations and rascaldom, and rest on the strength of integrity; greatness and power must not be sold for place-hunters and political dependants.

The doing away with apprentices in the Merchant service was a deadly blow struck at our Royal Navy. But let that pass, we must, as a nation, of course look for safety in our own power of defence. We must have a navy (men as well as ships, for one is useless without the other,) superior, not only to any one power, but to any possible coalition. Our navy must be a *National Navy*, not to be tampered with. Political ministerial changes must not affect it—we must always be ready and willing for the struggle of supremacy; able and willing to defend our own shores and protect our own commerce. Then, when such things have been brought about, conscious of our strength, we can again take up a dignified position in the councils of Europe, in addition to which the blessings of peace will be ours.

At this moment we all know, or think we know (and the uneasy feeling is still the same), that there is a cloud on the political horizon, no larger, perhaps, than the palm of a man's hand: this may spread. It is desirable then to put those ships we already have in an efficient state for immediate service—properly manned too!

Take the Mediterranean or Channel fleet; how many of the captains are ready for immediate action? We cast no slur on those officers—God forbid! If they are not ready it is not their fault; that rests with the whole official and Parliamentary class, who have not the moral courage to admit the truth and agree as to the remedy; they dare not open the eyes of the country to the true state of the case, but continue, wrapped up like snails in their shells, holding on, like grim Death to a dying Nigger, to perquisites of promotion, place, influence, patronage and so forth. The old fabric may fall to pieces and crumble in the dust for aught they care.

The whole system of dockyard management requires reform right throughout, from the humblest understrapper to the top-sawyer; but that would necessarily follow the reforms so loudly called for at head-quarters.

Always bear in mind that we live in ticklish

times and have queer neighbours. Any idea of invasion is, perhaps, simply absurd, but England may be attacked through her colonies; Louis Napoleon has now a greater military force at Martinique and Guadeloupe than we have in all our West-Indian possessions put together. He has fortified St. Pierre and Michelon, which lie between Newfoundland and Canada, contrary to the express terms of the treaty; and under pretence of meeting at Cape Breton the French mails (conveyed by Cunard steamers), he sends men-of-war thither, who return to those places heavily laden with coals. This is pretended to be for the use of the ships themselves, but every now and then a sailing ship takes a cargo, on account, it is said, of the merchants there, but in reality for the Government. The French thus have an immense store of coal, and every vessel laden with fish that sails thence to the French West-India Islands (Martinique and Guadeloupe) quietly conveys a certain portion of this fuel to form a dépôt for the use of the French Atlantic fleet.

The island of Cape Breton is one vast coal-field; the inhabitants, although naturally inclined to think favourably enough of England, are not unfavourably disposed towards France. And it has been observed of late, that their

friendship has been systematically courted by the latter. The coal mines are wholly unprotected, and could be either held, or rendered useless, at the pleasure of the aggressor. What renders all this more alarming is, that Halifax and the squadron at that station are entirely dependent upon these very mines for their supply of coals; so that, within six-and-thirty hours' sail from St. Pierre, one ship-of-war could reach Sydney, and render our fleet utterly powerless to move from their moorings.

On every foreign station, whether on the Atlantic or Pacific side of America, in the East (not just at this present on account of the fleet in Chinese waters, which by the way is under orders for home) or in the Mediterranean, the French are in greater strength than we are. The French naval force has been quietly and unostentatiously increased, so that if war were to break out, they would be in the ascendant in every quarter.

In these days of telegraphic communication, when news of hostility can be transmitted with the rapidity of lightning, it is not too much to say that Louis Napoleon, by his foresight, consummate tact, judicious preparations, and well-concealed plans, could sweep the commerce of England from the seas in six weeks.

We are aware that many will be much inclined to pooh-pooh this; they trust too much to what has been; in our palmy days, with immense advantages, we had still our work to do in order to gain our present reputation. We found a foe worthy of us: occasionally, perhaps, an unworthy commander permitted his ship to fall an easy prey into the hands of us Philistines: but these cases were the exception, not the rule. Although many run away with that idea, let them not lay that flattering unction to their souls.

The *programme Napoléonique* is immense—colossal. We have seen something similar before. You must always bear in mind, that the present Emperor follows closely in the footsteps of his uncle, and never forget that that potentate was not over-scrupulous. But before even he reigned, say in 1777, or thereabouts, our connection with the American Colonies was destroyed by the assistance, and through the machinations of France, insidiously conducted through her Marine Minister, who thus unwarily prepared the misfortunes and ruin of his own monarch, and was in a great measure the cause of that political earthquake which subsequently destroyed the independence of nations, and shook the pillars of the civilized

world. Thus arose that tremendous contest between a commercial and a military power, on the result of which so much of the happiness and liberty of mankind in general eventually depends.

How favourably matters are progressing in our time for a very similar turn-out? That war commenced without any public official declaration from either government. Then the navy of the United Kingdom—the natural support of its country's independence, was the only barrier which afflicted Europe could oppose to the overwhelming and devastating ambition of France. How should we stand now, when the navies of the two countries are adjusted to such a nice balance? These are matters full of grave import, and should not be passed over lightly. As for the present state of our navy, we cannot visit the sin on any particular individual, nor perhaps on any half-dozen, at all events we may say, "*Vis est notissima.*"

This new idea of his Imperial Majesty (we allude to his *frégates blindées*), and the vigorous style in which he goes to work upon them, might serve as a lesson to us, if we were not too busy selling, getting gain, and driving hard bargains (hard enough for us they'll turn out in the end); probably this is a mode peculiar to

that unfathomable potentate of making apparent his pacific disposition, and at the same time his pecuniary resources. But may it not be intended as an addition of strength for the accomplishment of the next step in the ladder of Napoleonic policy?

The rival navies (there is significance in the truthful term) are now at this moment about on a par in ships; our rivals have the advantage over us in manning them. They have a system; we have none. Our reckless folly in this respect is proverbial. Their sailors are trained men-of-war's men, always in their places when wanted. Our ships in case of need must be manned with raw material;—that brawny pig-tailed race of heroes is extinct. Are we not justified in saying, "Damn those two verjuiced specimens of ancient virginity, Mis-rule and Mis-management, for having so effectually undermined our resources?" Many a smart officer has within the last few years (to our own positive knowledge) had reason most bitterly to curse the asinine stupidity which has been too glaringly apparent on the part of some person or persons high in authority.

There are officers in the navy with whom no man would hesitate to go joyfully into action; there are yet a few men to follow them. Look

at the specimens in the Naval Brigade under the gallant Peel. Poor Peel ! (yet we must not pity him ; he died covered with glory)—what became of them after that, when their services were no longer immediately required ? Why—it should be burnt in with hot irons—the brave fellows went about the streets of Calcutta, *positively starving* ; they had done their work, and were paid off. No man worthy the name of Briton can fail to be moved at such a state of affairs. As we said before, we again repeat, disgusting, contemptible sophistry will not avail. If we wish to man our Royal Navy, something must be done, and that quickly. A good thing cannot appear too often, therefore let us pull forward the Athenian orator again :—

“There is one common bulwark which every prudent man will take care to maintain. It is the great security of nations, particularly Free States, against foreign Despotic Powers—Distrust ! Distrust ! ! Be mindful of that. Adhere to it, and you will be free from almost every calamity.”

Do not suffer yourselves to be blinded by concessions ; let not any Treaty of Commerce, or any other sop blind you. Remember the Athenian, and keep your powder dry !

CHAPTER IX.

BUT where is Harold? Shall I then forget to urge the youthful wanderer o'er the deep? Assuredly not. He has pitched into lobsouse hissing hot, and listened to the sweet voice of his Commander as he disavowed his parents. Poor Boodle had not the moral courage manfully to acknowledge his origin in the little jim-crack shop; that required something that Boodle possessed not. His earliest recollections appeared most mysteriously interwoven with Lord —, and his lordship's belongings.

Boodle's mother was a very fine woman, not handsome, yet sufficiently so to attract the attention—very particular attention too—of a peer, although she happened to embrace in her composition a vast amount of ignorance, vanity, impudence, and cockneyism (for Mrs. Boodle was a genuine cockney), and our friend the Commander was not very far wrong in denying the pretensions of Boodle, senior, to the honour and rights of paternity in his particular case. Also it must be acknowledged that there were

unmistakable signs apparent in his physiognomy; the likeness to his Lordship was most marvellous, even down to a wart on the end of his nasal organ.

Apart from those natural, his Lordship had no children, much to the disgust of his Lady, and so, somehow or other, young Boodle, through his wide-awake mamma, was quietly left on his father's hands; old Boodle being soothed by a handsome *douceur* for the ornaments he now carried about with him, and forfeiting the extreme pleasure and delight of rearing a spurious olive branch.

The Commander of the 'Brilliant' thus by a chance tumbled on his legs, and had a certain amount of success ensured to him in this world, and as to the next he did not trouble himself on the matter at all. Mrs. Boodle made up for her one great error by remaining faithful ever after, and presenting her loving spouse periodically with genuine offspring, to the tune of eleven, all of which made their entrance into this world apparently very much against their will, for they took the earliest opportunity of making their exit, all save one, and that the youngest, a girl, at the time we mention her about nineteen years of age, whereas Boodle rejoiced in the recollection of nine-and-thirty

summers, and Boodle's mother fifty-eight. She still lived. Her husband had topped his boom, and so had his Lordship.

These two deaths enabled her to live independent, and also to bring up her daughter like a lady (as she herself observed), not failing to inculcate a peculiar doctrine, "She was to be sure and remain virtuous till she married some spoon."

Having said so much, we must observe that it had entered the Commander's thick head lately that a matrimonial alliance between Harold Overdon and his sister Prudence, would be a very capital thing, but then how the deuce to introduce the matter puzzled him, more especially as he did not particularly desire to step from off his high pedestal by taking Harold home with him, and thus at once expose him to a battery of vulgarity which the mother would most likely open upon him, and thus jeopardize the consummation he so devoutly wished. Boodle took time to consider, and so permitted Harold to rise and make his bow without attempting to stop him.

Harold's entrance into the dog-kennel set apart for the accommodation of the 'Brilliant's' young gentlemen, was the signal for an ovation from his messmates, as seedy a set as you could

wish to clap eyes on, they being decidedly of humble origin, designated him the "young swell" generally, but on this particular morning the young swell wanted no breakfast, they were at liberty to make away with his share, and so thought it convenient to be civil.

A fat, greasy-looking youth got upon his legs, holding in his hands a dirty-looking cup with the handle off, and "proposed Overdon's health" in a filthy decoction of dirty water and coffee-grounds.

"He was sorry somebody else hadn't done it, but then he s'posed they wasn't able, owing to a want of heducation. Overdon was a trump, and he was proud of him, for adn't he been hengaged all night in a most harduous service, and adn't he pulled through to the henthusiastic delight of the Captin, so that he 'ad positively been hinvited to breakfast, a thing quite unear'd of since the old ooker had been in commission."

Frequent rappings of knuckles on the greasy table had interrupted this harangue, for the fat youth was the bully of the mess, and so commanded a certain amount of homage.

"Ah!" said the purser's assistant, "Higgins is full of the rich milk of human kindness, and he's such a beautiful orator. You are a lucky

fellow, Overdon, to have gained such a handsome eulogy from him."

"Well, Spareribs," replied Overdon, "if Higgins progresses so very favourably on the rich milk of human kindness, as you call it, if I were in your place I'd try it; he's as fat as a prize-ox, whereas you, with a rushlight in your inside, would make a first-rate poop-lantern for an admiral's ship."

This speech soon turned the milk sour, and so :

"Come, that's enough of your impudence, you bloated young haristocrat, you. Just stow your gab for 'alf-an'our, or else I'll punch your 'ead," broke from the bully.

"How very changeable is the wind in these parts. Ten minutes ago, Higgins, you lauded me to the skies, now you are inclined to quarrel with me. Allow me respectfully to suggest that you recall that threat; it would take two or three such as you to master me, therefore I beg you not to be so foolish as to come to blows."

Higgins started up, and discharged a mouthful of coffee straight in Overdon's face. That was enough for Harold; he was over the table, alongside of Higgins, and had laid him sprawling before the fat youth well knew where he was.

A faint cheer burst from the lips of the

youngsters assembled, at the sight of the discomfited bully. However, as the battle was not yet over, of course it would have been dangerous for such a set of cowards to take either side until victory had been gained by one or the other. They looked upon discretion as by far the better part of valour.

Higgins gradually recovered his senses, which were pretty nearly knocked clean out of him, and looked round at the eager faces collected to witness his discomfiture, and then showed an evident reluctance to come to time. At length for very shame sake, he rose slowly, and commenced spinning one fist rapidly round the other, but still there was no inclination to provoke another proof of Harold's prowess.

A faint jeer rose from those assembled, who were now pretty safe. They knew by their own feelings that it was all up with the bully. Higgins got excited at this, and struck out two or three blows at random; these were answered by another well-planted knock-down blow. The sanguinary fluid flowed in copious streams from the proboscis of his opponent, and so Harold Overdon fought his first fight, and became Cock of the Walk.

"Now, then, young gentlemen, I should jist very much like to know whether we are to be

favoured with the light of your countenances on deck to-day or to-morrow, whichever happens to be most convenient, I presume."

This gentle reminder proceeded from the lips of the Junior Lieutenant, and elicited as usual a prompt attention. There was a rush, and the little band of youngsters was quickly on deck as desired.

Very soon it became apparent, even to them, that something unusual was taking place. A sharp glance round showed them a fine man-of-war brig standing out from the land under a cloud of canvas.

"Egad," observed Higgins in a whisper to Harold, "we're in for it, my lad; that's a Frenchman come out to wop us, that is if she can, and we shall shortly be engaged."

Harold was then going into action, and from the ardour displayed by all on board, he feared they might get too near.

We know perfectly well that a great deal of absurdity passes among us about fear. Some people contend that they have never known it, that is all bosh. No man that ever breathed was without a certain amount of it. Bravery and fearlessness consist in the power to keep under and conceal those feelings which naturally will rise in moments of danger.

We have no fear of lowering Harold particularly in the opinions of our readers, when we admit that he funk'd it, and we shall not endeavour to portray his sensations when the first shot passed over the 'Brilliant.' He could before scarcely give credit to Higgins when that youth maliciously informed him that they would shortly be hard at it. He could not believe that his precious person would so soon be endangered. His thoughts returned to the Hospital, and to the rooms set apart for the pleasant study of anatomy; he, so lately the pet of his household, whose slightest ailment had been always immediately attended to by the medical adviser of the family, it could not be possible that he should now be exposed to the shot of the enemy.

Then the drum beat to quarters, and men rushed to their stations. Boodle retained our hero as his aide-de-camp on the raised quarter-deck, and there he stood perfectly paralyzed with fear, bowing most politely to each shot as it passed over the brig harmless, or struck a pile of arms injudiciously placed, the splinters therefrom flooring a good half-dozen; and again, there was the extreme felicity of watching the mangled bodies carried past him on their way below, for the surgeon's especial benefit. Now this brig had been in sight for some time before

anything definite could be made of her. She evidently halted between two opinions. The weather was hazy, certainly; yet no doubt could exist on one point, "her nationality;" she kept shivering her maintopsail, thus showing a disinclination to engage decidedly anti-English, and the rake of her masts and the cut of her canvas prevented opinion from wavering for an instant; besides, she had come apparently straight out of port; we say "apparently," because, as it turned out eventually, she had come from Brest, creeping along shore stealthily, in order to avoid those cruizers of ours that she had no business with, and retain all her strength intact for a struggle with the 'Brilliant;' those were her orders.

The Frenchman, although evidently diffident, showed plainly enough that he came out to court an action, and, to Boodle's credit be it spoken, that hero did not wish in any way to baulk him—far from it—he called his men aft, and told them that the vessel in sight was an enemy, and stated his intention to fight her. "She is one of their new craft," said he; "very different to this vessel of ours, and yet she must fall into our hands, and that before the sun sinks below the horizon."

"Sail ho!" sung out the look-out.

"Where away?" was Boodle's sharp query.

"On our weather bow, sir."

"What do you make of her?"

"She's rising fast, sir; brings the breeze up with her. Aye, one of our cutters, with signals flying, too, sir," he continued.

"Well, sir, speak up," shouted Boodle; "bear a hand; what flag has she?"

"Blue and white horizontal, red and blue perpendicular."

"That's enough, sir, for the present; it's her number; that's the 'Squid' cutter," he added to Schneider; "but what the devil he wants here just as I am going to amuse myself, I don't know; d—n it, the Frenchman sees her—now, there goes his mainyard again. God save the King but sink his cutter, say I," and so poor Boodle marched about demented.

"Shall we stand for the cutter, sir?" asked Schneider, very much delighted inwardly at a chance of getting away unharmed, for, as we have said, he was a confounded coward.

"Stand for the cutter, and turn my back on the Frenchman, I suppose," sneered Boodle; "no, sir, damn it, we'll stop just where we are, without starting tack or sheet."

The little fellow expanded his chest, took a long breath, and endeavoured to look big. Schneider tried hard to look so too, but, unfortunately, his knees evidently objected to the

weight they had to support, and trembled violently, so much so that Boodle at length noticed it; and then, seeing his first lieutenant's face livid, he said:

"Why, my good fellow, it really is not worth while to put yourself in such a passion—any person to see you would fancy that the Frenchman had punched your head; you tremble like an asp, and are pale with rage—*pallidis iræ*, as we say in the classics." Poor Boodle!—little enough he knew of the classics; no wonder, then, that he made a mistake; it never entered his head to tax his chief officer with chicken-heartedness. "Cheer up, man," continued he, "we'll be at 'em yet!" and that was just the last thing in the world Schneider wished.

The cutter came on meantime, and "hove to" to leeward; a boat was lowered, and the lieutenant in command of the 'Squid,' stepped on board the 'Brilliant.' Boodle, in high dudgeon, was there to receive him.

"Well, sir," said he, "you've just managed to step in between me and my enemy. Now, pray, what may you have to say to me?"

"Here are my orders, sir, from the Port-Admiral at Portsmouth; and there are yours from the same hand."

"Very good; favour me by stepping down

into my kennel, and we'll just overhaul them immediately;" then, turning to Mr. Schneider, he said, "Watch that gentleman; if he fills on her, you do the same, and jog after him. The cutter, sir," speaking to the lieutenant, "will, if you please, follow our motions at present." A signal to that effect was thrown out, and quickly answered by the 'Squid.'

The two commanders (for both were commanding at the time, although one was of inferior rank) descended, and Boodle set to work, and coned his orders. He could just make out that he was to be relieved by the 'Squib' on that station—to stand down Channel, keeping his eyes open as far as Ushant, and then make the best of his way into Plymouth, there to await further orders.

He cheered up a bit at this; being relieved, he could look after his captaincy, and, to help that on, take the French man-of-war brig then in sight. Stimulants were got out, and the two worthies hobnobbed at one another, and then ascended to the deck once more. Everything remained just as when they had descended; they shook hands cordially, and parted. No sooner had the 'Squid's' commander got clear, than Boodle swung his mainyard, and stood down for the brig.

CHAPTER X.

THE Frenchman appeared to doubt the propriety of engaging with the cutter, still so handy; he, too, swung his mainyard, and the two vessels went bowling merrily down Channel, exchanging shots now and again—just enough fun to keep up the excitement. Boodle fancied that the ‘Brilliant’ had the advantage in speed, as at present dead before it, and so hoped to come to a settlement very shortly. Labouring under this erroneous impression, he had the signal books got together, and with his own eyes saw the weights attached to the box, so that in case of accidents they could be thrown overboard. He visited every part of the ship, with Harold in company, and saw that all was in working order aloft and aloft.

A stern-chase is a long chase, and the ‘Brilliant’ lost ground in yawing, to bring her guns to bear; this little circumstance kept both vessels pretty well in their respective positions hour by hour, and Boodle became awfully impatient, and in the same ratio Schneider

plucked up. Night settled down on them, and they ceased firing, as though by common consent; but the little commander kept watch himself all that night, and tried all he knew to gain an advantage. Daylight came at last, and showed that his efforts had been rewarded; he was close to his enemy, who lost no time in opening the ball, evidently bent on bringing spars down about our friend's ears. The wind became light, and so Boodle could not manage to get as near as he desired. This was a great disadvantage, for the metal of the Frenchman was heavier than the 'Brilliant's,' and had a longer range; thus it happened that many men were sacrificed, and no good done. The Frog thought he had it all his own way, and so shortened sail. Boodle held on every yard of canvas, and shot ahead of her. Here was a chance not to be lost. Johnny Crapeaud profited by his adversary's damaged condition (for the Englishman's rigging was much cut about), and bore up, crossing her stern, and raking her—then, luffing sharp, made a very fair attempt at the bestowal of a starboard broadside; but Boodle was too sharp for him—men were at his braces, and the 'Brilliant' was flat aback in no time. The immediate consequence of this manœuvre was, naturally enough, to bring the

Frenchman's stern just on the Brilliant's quarter, and so the two vessels fouled, and very soon were alongside.

"Now then, my sons of thunder," roared Boodle in ecstasies to his boarders, "she's all our own. Come along, follow me."

And away he went, scrambling over the Frenchman's starboard quarter; but the boarders had been called on board there too, and her forecastle was crowded by a much superior force.

"'Vast heaving, you beggars," shouted Boodle to them. "Come here—here we are,—you frog-eating vagabonds, don't be taking a dirty advantage."

But the frogs paid no attention to his eloquence. They poured down on the 'Brilliant's' deck, and so Boodle was obliged to return and meet them.

"Avast boarding, my hearts of oak! back, every mother's son of you: that's you, my hearties," he shouted, as his men returned to their own deck, and led by himself, made good use of their boarding-pikes and cutlasses. "Drive'em back, damn'em, down with'em, and when we've done it, we'll splice the mainbrace in style."

Away went the frogs, pell-mell, back again, but not done; far from that, as the Britishers

soon had cause to know. They brought a gun to bear upon the 'Brilliant's' deck, and served it in earnest.

"Now then, bear a hand, my beauties; clear away a couple of those guns; let's have grape and canister; sweep those devils from that gun. Well, go a-head, sir, if you are anxious," shouted he to the Lieutenant, who was quietly taking a squint along one of them. "I wish your senior (Mr. Schneider) would make himself more handy."

Carrol took aim as coolly as though firing at porpoises, and let fly. A loud cheer proclaimed his success.

"A good many of those fellows are off the purser's books, at all events, Mr. Carrol; try again, you manage very well."

Again and again the gun was fired, and plucky as the Frenchmen were, they showed signs of distress.

"Blaze away, Carrol; blaze away," yelled Boodle. "That's your sort; give it to'em. They don't seem to like it at all. But where the devil is Mr. Schneider? Overdon, look for Mr. Schneider, and tell him I want him directly."

Poor Harold did not much fancy moving, but away he went, and looked all about the decks;

went down among the wounded, examined the killed—a most awful task to him, and yet deuce a sign could he see of him; and so he reported accordingly to his commander.

“Ah, damn it; I suppose he managed to tumble overboard in boarding. He was in too much of a passion—too anxious to be at’em. Well, it can’t be helped, we must do without him, that’s all.” And so Boodle banished all thought of him from his mind.

Meanwhile, the Frenchman had gradually ceased firing, and at last stopped altogether. Carrol gave’em one more taste of the grape and canister, then down came their ensign by the run, and Boodle gave a crow of victory.

Who can paint Harold’s delight, when he was made to understand that the action was over, and he found himself unhurt? He began to think he had known no fear; considered himself a hero, ready to face any enemy; more especially when Boodle, elated at his success, turned to him and said, “Bravo, Overdon, you stood fire wonderfully well; never budged an inch. Remember, youngster, you are now a hero, and will be able to spin such yarns when you get home, of your individual prowess as will rather astonish the natives.”

Now, that this Frenchman had been fairly

fought and won, cannot be doubted; but we must "first catch our hare, then skin him." The action was fought within disagreeable proximity to the coast. The French brig's sails and running rigging had escaped serious damage, whereas those of the 'Brilliant' had been cut up pretty smartly. Perceiving his advantage, the enemy availed himself of it, made sail, re-hoisted his colours, and ran into his own port, which was close under his lee.

Poor old Boodle gazed with astonishment, and waxed exceeding wrath; but he had been so dreadfully mauled in his running and standing rigging, that he could hardly work his ship; and as to making sail in pursuit, the very idea of such a thing would have been absurd. He was greatly favoured by circumstances, and might have considered himself fortunate in the weather. The water was smooth, or his masts would assuredly have been in jeopardy. Had they engaged in mid-channel, or at all events further off shore, the result might have been different. Boodle would have had him snug enough; but as it was, why, the enemy escaped, and there was an end of it.

No sooner was the enemy clear of them, than the redoubtable Mr. Schneider made his appearance on deck, looking, it must be ac-

knowledge very much like a ghost. The Commander stared hard at him, as well he might, and then he exclaimed :

“Where the devil did you last arise from, sir. I’d put you down as D D.”

“I’m so ill, sir, I hardly know what to do with myself; taken so suddenly, it was alarming. I thought I’d lay down for a few moments—once down, I found it impossible to rise, and so remained until the worst symptoms had passed. Here I am now, sir, ready to do my duty.”

“Here you are now, ready to do your duty,” said Boodle, repeating, but quite in the dark regarding Schneider’s real motives; “well, I’m sorry, after all, that you should have lost your chance. But then it’s no chance, after all our trouble. Look there, sir; there’s a vessel that fairly belongs to me, but her captain don’t know the difference between mine and thine. How should he, seeing he’s a Frenchman? Look here, sir, at our helpless state, and then tell me if we ain’t in a pretty damnable mess.” And Boodle looked sorrowfully around him.

“I very much regret my unavoidable absence, sir; matters might have been different. Of course, I mean, sir, that your orders through me would have been more promptly obeyed and

carried out. Nothing helps a captain to such an extent as an able first lieutenant, sir."

"I think in your case, under the circumstances, you might have left that for me to say ; however, it is not now a question of words, Mr. Schneider. I need not inform such an able first lieutenant, that there is now a pretty considerable amount of work to be done,—ay, and smartly too. Here, on a lee shore, how the devil are we to claw off in our present predicament ? Supposing it comes on to blow, eh, tell me that ? Don't stare at me, sir, like a conger eel."

Boodle waxed mighty hot again ; words came thick and fast. An able first lieutenant might not quite have approved of the style ; but such a cur as Schneider—bah ! it mattered not.

"Turn the hands to, sir," he roared. "Let's have the ship refitted. Get up a new suit of sails. Let's have a few coils of small rope—precious few we've got, I'm thinking—but anything must do for the present to reeve, somehow. Look sharp, sir. Let's have the topmen aloft, unbending those damned rags. I'll see after the wounded, and have the dead removed out of sight. Knot and splice all you can aloft ; cut away the rest, and reeve. Send your best men aloft, and tell them not to wait for orders, but unbend as soon as possible."

Schneider moved off sharp, and Boodle dived for stimulant. Many a man flies to drink in his sorrows and difficulties, and in nine cases out of ten by pursuing such a course just doubles them. Our Commander fortunately was too restless to settle down to liquor properly; he just poured out a bumper, tossed it off, and was on deck again like a shot, peering aloft, and, as a matter of course, doing more harm than good by interfering injudiciously with the men at their work.

“ Now then, there, you men on the maintop-sail-yard, look alive, confound you; be smart with those halyards. Foretopsail-yard there, topgallant-yard too, what the blazes are you about—waiting for riggers from Portsmouth, I s’pose, to come and help you; bear a hand, you lubbers, or I’ll start some of you, by Heaven.”

And so he raved on; it does not suit our purpose to follow him, bad luck to us, if we did we should astonish some of our readers. The Royal Navy then was not quite the flower from which to procure elegant extracts, far from it; on the contrary, language used was abominable; but then they did their work, and coarse language was thought nothing of—rather approved than otherwise, and taken to as naturally as mother’s milk.

In accordance with his instructions, Boodle

walked off down Channel, keeping his little piggish eyes wide open, and making a note of every little thing that caught his attention, because he did not quite know what he was to do, or what his superiors had thought it possible he might see. Very probably those superiors had forgotten all about Boodle and his orders long before; however, that was nothing to him. Harold, having sharp eyes, was posted up on the foretopmast cross-trees, with orders to report everything he saw; and there he remained hour after hour, only just being relieved now and again for his grub, without anything important catching his eye. He reported a shoal of porpoises and a school of mackerel, but his Commander did not think the Admiralty required notice of their movements; yet, nevertheless, he made a private entry of the interesting facts, and anxiously awaited further intelligence.

“Sail ho!” sung out Harold.

“Ah, that’s more like it,” thought Boodle.

Very soon several others were reported.

“Some fleet or other, you may depend,” said Schneider to Carrol; “hope ’t isn’t of French extraction. Well, we can’t tackle them alone, that’s certain. He wouldn’t attempt it, eh, do you think he would?” queried he.

"Yes, certainly," answered Carrol; he knew a great deal more of Schneider than his Commander did, and so took delight in worrying him. The first looked blue, just for all the world as though he had always fed on mercury.

"I am afraid you're in a bad state, Schneider; why, another of your attacks seems to be coming rapidly on."

"Why, yes—it does seem like it. I feel very queer—my berth is so full of draughts; I think I shall lay down in the run—just a few moments, you know," and he dived forthwith.

Carrol did know all about it, and couldn't help laughing outright, although confoundedly ashamed of his superior officer.

"Down in the run, eh?" muttered he; "well, that is about the safest place for an old woman on board ship. Why the devil doesn't he die and make room for a better man?"

Boodle was all this time up alongside of Harold. Sure enough they could make out a fleet of large ships, still hull down, but evidently standing up Channel. The Commander looked hard at them for some time, then made the best of his way on deck and immediately hauled up on an easy bowline for the English land, made sail as rapidly as possible, and shaped his course for Plymouth.

No sooner had the 'Brilliant' arrived and brought up, than Boodle, in full fig, hurried ashore and made his report. "A French fleet passing up Channel" was the sum and substance of it, but this, added to previous rumours, by a simple multiplication of two and two, gave a result which required prompt action.

On Boodle's arrival on board the 'Brilliant' for some papers he had in his hurry forgotten, certain information he allowed to ooze out regarding their future movements induced our illustrious friend Schneider to tender his resignation. His health was so indifferent that really he found himself compelled to quit the service for a time; then, observing a quiet smile on Carrol's good-humoured phiz, he added: "I am the sole remaining prop to an aged father, and so, as a dutiful son, am bound to take his feelings into consideration."

Boodle, without hesitation, took him ashore with him, dunnage and all; thus the brig lost an officer neither ornamental or useful, and the Royal Navy, for the time at least, a disgrace.

Carrol became senior lieutenant, and very soon effected a great change on board, requisite indeed after a reign of incompetency.

Before dusk that night the 'Brilliant' was again under weigh, bound for Portsmouth with

despatches. Boodle and Carrol paced the deck together, yarning pleasantly enough. Harold was midshipman of the watch, and with all the zeal of a young hand kept constantly on the move. It was a glorious night, and our young hero turned it to account. He thought of his home, and then wandered to the Castle and strolled with Ruth. That boy was happy and proud. He gazed at the quiet ocean on which the moonbeams danced and smiled joyously; he cast his eyes aloft, there was just sufficient wind to keep the sails pleasantly asleep; he looked around him, it was the same on every side; a world of waters, not one object to diversify the view or to intercept his keen glance. How can people complain of the sameness and unvarying uniformity of the objects which meet the eye at sea? We could look about us for hours without an unpleasant feeling of weariness on the deep. To the serious man it produces thought; there is music in the rush of the waters as the ship forces her way through them or rises buoyantly over them; and there is a nameless majesty in the mighty ocean, even when we chance to contemplate it under the calm and unruffled form which is impressed on it, when moved by no gentle breath from heaven to soft undulations, and when its mighty

vastness reposes grandly in its own magnificence.

Harold was startled from his revery rudely, a loud laugh rung out from the raised quarter-deck ; probably we may ascertain what moved men to mirth on such a night, when there was food astir for deep thought and contemplation.

We have said that the Commander and his Senior Lieutenant paced the deck and yarned ; their conversation was diversified, and at length turned on Schneider. Boodle said he could not quite understand but pitied him, inasmuch as his health obliged him to quit a service holding out such advantages to the brave, and just at a time when it offered such peculiar facilities for advancement. Carrol allowed him to run on at a great rate, and then quietly remarked, that Schneider was a pious man, and well brought up ; he knew the Commandments, and kept at least one of them to the letter. Boodle was slow at comprehension, but he smiled.

“ Which is that, Mr. Carrol, which is that ? ” he asked.

“ Why the fifth, sir, I believe.”

“ And what does that say, eh ? All the Commandments run in my head together, I can never pitch upon one out of book.”

“ Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy

days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

"Honour thy father—very good, indeed; he did say something about his father, but he didn't mention his mother, you know; not a word about her."

"You must take it altogether, sir, not divide it. Did it never occur to you that he was inclined to show the white feather? He never felt ill till we tackled the brig, and was well again when she sheered off. We sighted a French fleet, and he immediately suffered a relapse, and now, when he found we might have plenty to do, why, he bolts altogether."

Boodle comprehended all at once; the joke took, and he roared with laughter until he was obliged to desist, then he relapsed.

"Oh, the sneaking hound! how he has weathered upon me. I never thought it possible for a sailor to be a coward."

Poor fellow! he was weathered often enough without knowing it.

CHAPTER XI.

ABOUT the time of Boodle's arrival at Plymouth there was a tremendous row in our House of Commons on the vexed question of supply, and goodness knows how far they might have gone, had not their dissensions been brought suddenly to an end in such a manner as to unite all parties, and cause them to pull together with a will, in prosecuting vigorously the same measures. What could this have been—you ask—why what should it have been but a menace from our great and ancient enemies—intelligence had been received of an intended invasion. Parliamentary disputes had almost become personal matters between members—the great mass of the people were dissatisfied, and clamoured loudly—then, as now, party and passion went hand in hand; the only difference now is that they are not carried to such a violent length—political moderation has become impregnated into society and throughout it—at all events outwardly; so as to mask antipathies, and teach us to discuss decently, and without

scandal; although many, it must be allowed, are now dragged along they know not whither. Then, in the heat of debate, many things were said, that honourable members in their lucid moments wished unsaid. Well—this was a time seized upon by the French to agitate a question that always did lay close to their hearts—they did not, neither do they now, understand John Bull. Why, two brothers may quarrel, even fight, but in the midst of rancorous feelings—in the height of their anger, they will unite their strength to defend their mother or sister if such a moment has been seized upon by a third party for outrage; so it was with our Parliament, and so it is with dear old John Bull—he'll growl and quarrel, and fight to his heart's content all to himself—have awful rows, turn his house almost out of window, but nobody must attempt to steal the plate; if such is the case, all private wrongs are thrown overboard and forgotten; but the interloper, the would-be thief, is set upon, and pitched into; from being combatants they become allies for the common good among themselves, and in defence of common interests. The French seized upon what they considered a good opportunity. "Charles Edward," said they "at the head of a French army once landed in England, revolu-

tion will now follow in his footsteps, the people are at present ripe for it."

There were Frenchmen in those days (and so there are now in this, our time) of violent, enterprising temperament—they could see that even in the event of a miscarriage in their confounded scheme, a diversion, at all events, of incalculable value would be made in favour of France, by a descent upon the shores of Great Britain; it was from no love or regard to the Stuarts—bah, all that is humbug—self-interest is true philosophy. A commander-in-chief was appointed to this army, intended for invasion, consisting of some twenty thousand men, and an immense number of vessels were collected together at Calais, Boulogne, and Dunkirk, in fact just under friend Boodle's nose; our beautiful county of Kent was forthwith to be turned into a bear-garden, for their especial diversion.

At Brest, under the very nose of other of our commanders of cruizers, the work was carried on with vigour, to bring out a fleet of ships in every way fitted to act as a convoy, strong enough to resist in case resistance should be required at sea, which assuredly was an extremely probable event.

Young Charles Edward was removed from Rome to Paris, and there (the latter place) of

course thick heads were laid together, and a pretty mess of porridge was the result.

The fleet sailed from Brest, and proceeded up the English Channel—they were espied as we have before mentioned, by Boodle, and all Plymouth soon knew about it, as did also the bigwigs at the Admiralty (for messengers had been sent off at once), who lost no time, for a wonder, in taking such steps as would put a stopper on their precipitate career; the fleet laying at Spithead, and that at Chatham got orders to rendezvous in the Downs, and then when united they were to act vigorously. Troops were moved down, and every man was to be at his station—the approaches to the Thames and Medway were strengthened materially, and the militia were called out; of course all the fat was in the fire when the news came before Parliament of the design in favour of a Papist as Pretender to our throne—that old gentleman of Rome they looked upon as so very much of the image of Belzebub; many objected simply because they hated revolution and riot, and were anxious to keep the reigning king on the throne; others there were who took the matter up theologically; they knew that Romanists ascribe an equal if not a greater glory to the Virgin Mary than to the

Son of God, because right and reason willeth that the mother be above the son, therefore they delighted to put the Son under the command of his Virgin Mother.

Altogether it verily appeared as though Babel were let loose; indignation, at all events, was set in a proper channel, and all united warmly, from entirely different motives, in taking such measures as should overthrow such a tissue of abomination and defeat, so damnable an attempt; every precaution being meanwhile taken to preserve intact the public peace and wellbeing at home.

While all this was going on, the enemy on the other side of the Channel was far from being idle; the embarkation of troops proceeded with all convenient, in fact inconvenient, despatch; the French fleet of ships of war from Brest actually got up as far as Dungeness, and there were obliged to anchor; the fleet from Spithead had most likely passed very close to them during the night, for they joined the Chatham squadron in the Downs that morning, and the united forces got under weigh, and commenced beating down against a light breeze.

It may be questioned whether the Commander-in-Chief was wise in tripping anchor

under the circumstances, it is too late however now to inquire into that little matter, and besides no harm was done, and so never mind.

The breeze, light as it was, held good sufficiently long to enable the English fleet to sight that of France, and then it left them—there was no longer a stir in the air or in the sea; the wind failed altogether, leaving the tide against them, so they were utterly powerless. Thus it happened that the hostile forces brought up in sight of one another, but well out of gunshot range—a good thing indeed for the Frenchmen. A very strong breeze set in just before nightfall, which soon freshened into a hard gale, and then became a heavy one. The French fleet slipped from their anchors, and bowled away down Channel, as though old Nick had given them a kick. The British followed in spite of the storm which raged furiously, driving the noble armaments, so stately and majestic, over the troubled waters, at speed, and causing a thrill of pleasure to dart like lightning through the breast of every English sailor on board. Under the circumstances no council of war could be held by flag officers, to consult upon the occasion; it would be a matter for each commander separately to struggle hard to do his duty, and every man was sure to follow

his leader wherever led—darkness succeeded to the light of day, the solemn gloom of midnight approached, and yet unerringly they followed the foe—the struggling gleam of a lantern, or report of a signal-gun sufficing for indication as to their whereabouts. Away sped the foe like hunted hares, followed by the united pack—this then was the style in which the much vaunted French fleet maintained their position, and struggled for supremacy; they were rewarded for their temerity by being driven like sheep from off the ground they had dared to let go their anchors upon, and from the Commander-in-Chief to the children (we may almost call them) whose especial duty it was to serve out the powder from the magazines, the same spirit prevailed throughout the British fleet—they were ready and perfectly willing to try their strength, and bring the matter to an issue,—the officers full of valour to repletion. An heroic spirit influenced the men—the hours of gloom and darkness appeared to their fevered minds as multiplied in number and length, and anxiously enough was the return of day looked for. It came at last, and then the enemy's fleet appeared scattered over the wild waste of waters, many of them just discernible. All were now hull down, and under a heavy press of canvas. The

British made sail too, and the chase was kept up with undiminished spirit, in spite of the gale which drove them at great speed, yet the ardent desires of the seamen wished for more still, in order to come up with the enemy; but that enemy showed no disposition to favour a nearer acquaintance with the heroes of England than uncontrollable necessity put upon them; they made the best possible use of the breeze which favoured them more and more, closed, and kept together in a compact body, thus dashing the hopes of Admiral Sir —, who, when he first made them out in the morning, chuckled at their scattered and disunited state; one of the French ships, a two-decker, went ashore—she had hugged the land too close aboard, and every soul perished.

Darkness again arrived, and the English ships were, unwillingly enough, “hove to;” the French made a dash, and some succeeded in getting into Brest all right—others came to grief, engulfing their crews with themselves; and so ended a chase, spirited enough, but bearing no fruit at all palatable to the British tar.

However, this gale drove ashore and smashed up a vast majority of their rotten transports along the coast, and so this confounded threat of invasion passed away, and we have a firm

belief that so it will be to the end of the chapter.

Protestant England is guarded by a power superior to that of men, and as long as she remains true to herself, and to those institutions which it has pleased God to entrust to her keeping—all will be well with her; hers is a great and glorious destiny; to her is given much, of her much will be required—let us not then fall short. In India the other day our enemies were to us as a hundred to one, and yet it pleased Him to give us the victory. Let us always bear well in mind that it is His right hand and mighty arm which hath given it to us, and not be vain-glorious.

CHAPTER XII.

FRANCE may almost be spoken of as our natural enemy. Those who are given to research might easily arrive at the conclusion that, taking the last seven hundred and fifty years, out of that time we have positively been at war with France for two hundred and sixty-nine years. In the fourteenth century we had a turn of fifty-two years, and in the fifteenth, fifty years. However, in this book we have almost done with that country. We have had many other enemies with which to cope, and among them that national failing, *drink*. We have discharged Mr. Schneider from the 'Brilliant,' but as a warning to others, we will just for a time follow him.

At present the service is suffering in many parts of the world from the degrading influence of *the bottle*. We could mention by name officers who even now are a disgrace to the uniform they wear. Really, in this the nineteenth century, we might reasonably hope for better things, but alas! there is the propensity just the same as in the seventeenth.

Well, Mr. Schneider took himself off imme-

diately after landing, to a tavern, and then and there commenced a life for which he was peculiarly fitted, dissolute to a degree.

We can understand a man with a light pocket taking up his abode at a humble house of entertainment, where, if he chooses he can mix with company like himself, studying economy, and yet he may manage to keep himself respectable ; but we cannot understand a man's giving up everything in order to let loose all his vicious passions, and allow them to run riot unbridled, without any decent regard for his own status, or any idea of the duty he owes to others.

However, Schneider pricked off his own course on a chart full of errors, and steered by it ; what wonder then that he came to grief ! The people who kept this tavern (the sign was the 'Blue Anchor') were no better than they ought to be. Their house was the resort of those who had strangely forgotten themselves, and, although in a low neighbourhood, the tavern had earned for itself even among the squalid inhabitants of that particular part, a very bad name.

The tavern was kept by a couple beyond middle-age, named Webber, but the management had devolved on their only child, a daughter, who was about seven or eight-and-twenty years of age. The life she led was

written in legible characters on her features, unfortunately, otherwise she would have passed muster as rather a nice-looking girl, that is to say when she condescended to perform her ablutions, but the principle on which she went was bad. She covered her person with finery, thinking that flash jewellery and bright-coloured ribbons would conceal the grub and filth beneath. This girl was anxious for many reasons to get settled in life, and now in Schneider an opportunity presented itself not to be allowed to slip. His circumstances were not particularly flourishing, but then she had saved money, gained goodness knows how, and then he was a senior lieutenant, a sort of aristocrat, to her; so she opened fire by encouraging him in his extravagance until his little stock of money was gone, and then in the course of their intimate relations (for she had become his mistress), she forced on him a loan; this first help over the stile was quickly followed by another, then his appeals to her purse became frequent, and were always most readily responded to in small sums. One thing, however, must be said, this money was spent for the good of the house, and so it all returned to her pocket again, and the business in proportion was benefited. Schneider was constantly in a state of mops and brooms, frequently very drunk, but never sober. Under

these circumstances he became maudlingly sentimental, and positively matters went so far that at length he himself was the first to speak of marriage, and when he met with a well-feigned half-sort of refusal, would not rest until he had gained her promise to be his altogether. While the father in London was busily engaged in his tailoring and outfitting business, happy in the idea of his son's being afloat in such an honourable capacity, that son was disgracing himself at Plymouth, and working his own ruin as diligently and rapidly as possible, a thought of his poor old father never entering his head, and if one had, probably, it would have been dismissed with an oath.

The old couple had been duly informed by their dutiful daughter of her betrothal, and of course their delight was only equalled by their surprise. However, they thought it necessary to strike the iron while it was hot, and so preparations were immediately set on foot for the marriage, and the victim was kept well supplied with liquor, in order that he might not have the sense to change his mind. One morning when they rose, much to his astonishment, she proceeded to array herself in virgin white, and presented to him a bran-new suit of undress uniform, at the same time flourishing a licence over her head in high glee, and telling him that

"the psalm-singer would be ready in church at ten, and so the sooner they was off, why, the better she'd be pleased. A coach would be at the door to carry them to the steeple-house in style."

They dressed and descended. There were the old people togged off just about spiffy, and in addition to them there was another couple—if Schneider had been all right he would have been transfixed with shame and indignation; but then if "we will go among the crows, we must expect to get shot at." There stood a drunken, mutinous scoundrel who had sailed with Schneider for his commanding officer, and been lashed over and over again, all to no purpose. Every possible scheme had been tried to keep him right, but it was no go,—“What’s bred in the bone,”—and so he was dismissed in disgrace. This fellow, in company with a woman, one of the lowest of the low, was there, the one to act as best man, and the other as bridesmaid. Instead of taking matters as one would have naturally thought he would, Schneider fraternized affectionately with this worthy pair, and having taken their “morning,” the party set out for the place of worship designated by the bride a steeple-house. The officiating clergyman had been well fee’d, and so the ceremony passed over. The poor bridegroom was so fuddled that he did not notice the little fact of a huge

cocked hat being substituted for the undress cap. Altogether the ceremony was a farce, —a sacred ordinance shamefully desecrated, of that there could be no shadow of a doubt. All passed off, and the happy couple (what a mockery) returned to the breakfast that we must pass over, and then started for London, as the bride insisted on an immediate introduction to "her newly-obtained aristocratic relations in that City."

Late at night they arrived in Exeter, and there the curtain fell with a vengeance. The night passed over cloudily enough, and next morning, after swallowing about three parts of a bottle of brandy on an empty stomach, Schneider applied to his wife for money. He wanted to enjoy himself, and see the sights. He may or may not have applied in a proper manner, at all events he met with a flat refusal. Drunk as he was, one word led on to another, until at length, incensed beyond endurance, he took hold of the neck of the bottle, and with all his strength struck his wife with it. The blow took effect upon her temple; she fell smothered in her blood, and was raised only to be placed on a bed from which she never rose alive. Matters were made worse by circumstances. In her bosom a babe had leaped, and now it was brought forth in the time of her agony; we say

it, for there was simply the clay, life was extinct at the time of birth.

Schneider passed from his marriage chamber to a place of confinement; thence to his trial, and condemnation to death for "wilful murder." The condemned cell received him,—a white-headed, broken-down man. Then came the end in this world,—"*the scaffold!*"

The poor father had obtained the sad tidings, and received his death-blow. Posting to Exeter, he arrived just in time for a final interview. The shock proved too much for him;—father and son passed away at one time. The innocent went with the guilty. And all this took place through an inordinate affection for "the bottle." Generally it is the rock on which "*the coward*" is shipwrecked. He has not the pluck naturally, to meet and ride buoyantly over the many trials and difficulties which are inevitably our portion in this world, and so he flies to stimulants for Dutch courage or oblivion. Many may take warning from Schneider; he lived like a hog, and died the death of a malefactor, bringing his father down with him with sorrow to the grave. "The bottle," then, is an enemy, which it is unwise to underrate; let us all be prepared to meet him as men.

CHAPTER XIII.

WE left the 'Brilliant' under weigh for Portsmouth. She arrived all right, delivered her despatches, and sailed a few hours after, with the squadron for the Downs. That squadron we have been in company with, and therefore need not repeat.

When the French fleet slipped through their fingers, and made Brest, the English Commander-in-Chief signalled the 'Brilliant' to close with the flag-ship, once more to receive despatches for Portsmouth. These despatches set forth that the Commander-in-Chief proposed remaining in the chops of the Channel, there to watch the movements of the enemy until he received counter-orders from head-quarters.

Between this fleet and Portsmouth, Boodle was doomed for a considerable time to act as messenger, until in fact the fleet was recalled, and then the 'Brilliant' was ordered into Portsmouth Harbour, to fit out for foreign service; on his return from which, our Commander was promised his long wished-for promotion; but unfortunately he became impressed with the

idea that he was hardly dealt by; he brooded over his troubles, and very foolishly made a thorny bed for himself to lay on.

He was bound, in the first place, to the Mediterranean, and then across the Western Ocean to the West Indies. To add to Boodle's troubles, the crew, on which he had prided himself so much, and which, from long companionship worked like clockwork together, was to be taken from him. The Honourable captain with whom Will Jarvis sailed was fitting out his frigate, and wanted a smart crew; his interest was quite sufficient to capsize poor old Boodle, so the crew were handed over, and odds and ends were considered quite good enough for the man-of-war brig. Be it observed, that "kissing goes by favour;" always did, ever will, to the end of the chapter.

Harold Overdon took passage in the 'Brilliant,' having received his appointment to a smart frigate; a lieutenancy was very shortly to be given him. Here we see what interest will do.

The 'Brilliant' sailed, and had a fine north-east wind, which wind soon took her out clear of the Channel, but unfortunately the poor brig was altogether different from what she used to be. Boodle, following the course pursued by his late first-lieutenant, urged on by what he considered

unfair treatment, "took to the bottle," consequently there was a vast amount of troubles brewing for him.

Carrol was now Senior Lieutenant. He had plenty of bulldog courage, but unfortunately not much head-piece. He sadly lacked energy and a proper amount of discretion to cope with the Commander under present circumstances. Drink affected Boodle peculiarly; he became a sort of nigger-driver; bullied the men, and not unfrequently started them himself, and clewed up by taking an aversion to Carrol too strong to be controlled. The Master, who rejoiced in the name of Sextant (a very fit and proper one by-the-by), was not averse to grog; on the contrary, he and his Commander managed to get on remarkably well together, and would disappear beneath the table about the same time. Unfortunately, when sober, Mr. Sextant used his influence to increase the bitter feeling now existing between parties, instead of acting as a mediator. It may be too much in Boodle's favour to say, he was mad; but most assuredly he went to greater lengths than would any sane man. The boatswain and his mates had now the cat constantly in their hands. At first, it was only the green-horns or landsmen who were subjected to merciless floggings, for errors or omissions the most

trifling. But at last the lash became as deeply dyed in the blood of some of the best men of the ship; and the day after they passed Gibraltar, Boodle positively gave orders for Carrol to be seized up. This was a step too far even for caprice and inordinate severity. Carrol took his stand respectfully, and requested the Commander to consider before going any farther. The sailors looked on with lowering brows. They knew Carrol to be a smart seaman and good officer, and had no intention of allowing matters to go further. So they closed round him in a body, and spoke as eloquently as silent men could do. Boodle looked straight in Carrol's face, never even glancing at the men, and ordered him below under arrest. Being too proud to inquire reasons, the prisoner kept silence, and was marched off. The brig we may now consider in a state of mutiny, or something very like it, for when piped down the men remained on deck and smoked forward, carrying on an earnest conversation in low tones—suspicious symptoms!

Harold paced up and down in the waist of the brig. He had plenty to think of. Scenes of wanton, brutal violence and drunken incapacity would mix inharmoniously with that quiet scene of home. He was filled with horror and disgust. Tyranny and torture

were both new to him, and his heart sickened as he thought.

But a change had come over the face of nature: rapid always are these changes in the Mediterranean. Boodle and Sextant were both on the raised quarter-deck, but it is to be feared too far gone to notice anything peculiar in the look of the weather. Harold happened to look round, and soon saw that something was wrong, and at once went up to the Commander, and directed his attention to it. But he only hiccupped out an oath, which the Master took up and added something about "insolence, and not belonging to the ship." But Harold dived below immediately, and told Carrol about it. He, Carrol, was angry, and was bent on demanding a court-martial; besides, being under arrest, he had nothing to do with the ship. Harold knew the Mates were of no use, so he hurried away to Lambert (the Junior Lieutenant, who was sick but speedily obeyed the summons), and he, with Overdon to lean on (for he was very weak), was quickly on deck—just in time to be too late. A squall struck the brig, and took her topmasts out of her forthwith; luckily enough too, for if they had held on, then "Good-by." Squalls came down thick and fast; a heavy sea speedily rose; and there was no hope of fine weather, for it looked

dirty and angry all round: there was heart in it this time, and so, poor fellows, all soon found out. It may be all very true (and we must admit the truth), that, amidst all the multitudinous and sublime scenes which Nature displays, none are more awfully impressive than a storm at sea, when the strong wind raiseth the waves of the mighty deep, and the floods lift up their voice with a portentous cry of death and destruction; but at the same time there is misery and unpleasantness in it—how much, none can tell but those whose hard luck it is to encounter it manfully. Let us, however, stick to the 'Brilliant' as long as she lasts.

Mr. Sextant, the Master, was sobered at last, and he gazed on the spars, which now hung over the side, ruefully, and then his eye roamed about aloft; the men were busy cutting away the wreck for fear of damage to the hull.

Boodle, too, shook off, as well as he could, the effect of his potations; but it must be remarked neither the Commander or his Master were fit to take command, neither could collect himself sufficiently to issue a coherent order. The men saw how matters stood; they released Carrol, and requested him to take charge for the present at all events.

Day was at hand, night was rolling up the thick blanket of darkness. The first streak of

dawn sufficed to show them their position, awkward enough, by George, it was.

Carrol had barely time to grasp in what had happened during his temporary absence, before the brig struck heavily, and immediately fell over on her broadside, receiving considerable punishment from the seas, which swept in pregnant with the power of mischief; then suddenly the men (clustered forward) appeared high and dry, elevated many feet. It was but for a moment; as on the occasion of her launch, the poor 'Brilliant' at her grave slid as it were gracefully down the ways, and then disappeared for ever.

Harold felt her going down under him, and instinctively, as it were, clung frantically to a spare spar, that had been got ready by the carpenters for conversion into a jury topmast; lucky for him that he did so, he knew his case to be deperate, it was every man for himself and God for us all. The accident was so sudden that little could have been done, even with men in a high state of discipline; but had all been well probably it would never have happened,—“that” no man can venture to assert positively.

Harold was afloat on his spar; he had some idea of swimming, but then a donkey-engine of fair power would have been required to propel the spar. He had confidence in its power to keep him above water as long as he could hold

on, and confidence at such a moment is a very fine thing; many useful lives have been lost to their country through the want of that very useful article.

With such a sea on the coast as there was then, salvation appeared doubtful. Under such circumstances thought for others was out of the question, not to be expected; in point of fact, although a portion of the topmast was very much at their service, it became positively necessary for him to avoid being grasped by any of the drowning crew.

The horrid cries and despairing shrieks of anguish from his shipmates for whom the watery grave was at present open, was excessively trying to the boy, naturally noble; and as he rose buoyant on the crest of the wave, and looked back into the watery hollow, there he saw his Commander, Boodle. He even fancied that Boodle looked at him reproachfully, certainly the gestures were wild; he now apprehended that his time was come. And how was he prepared to meet it? Many, very many, have viewed such a scene, but few have lived to describe it. Harold, in his turn, sank into the dark abyss, and all the horrors were shut out from his view. When he again rose, and gained a glimpse, nothing but breakers caught his eye; for the ear there was the roar, but all else was hushed

in Death. Another tremendous sea followed, between its crest and the heavens a hand and a portion of the arm was visible, apparently clutching at the clouds, that hand and arm belonged to Boodle; a faint gurgling sound, borne to Harold's ear on the wings of the wind, followed—yet another sea, and all was over. All appeared dark and silent around him.

He then, that youngster, had witnessed the dying struggles of an ignoble crew; lastly, their Commander had passed away. As to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, doubtless they troubled themselves little with the circumstance of the case; to them it may have been a relief, a happy release when they heard of it.

Everything appeared to announce to Harold that his last hour had arrived, and that his life was only spared for a few brief moments in order that he might witness their last agonies; for even if he should by a fluke manage to reach the shore, there was the surf, which threatened him with instantaneous destruction on the rocks, which now showed out black and bold. Then, allowing even that he escaped that danger through the interposition of Providence, the coast was, or appeared to be, precipitous, threatening a lingering death; but luckily for him his presence of mind never forsook him at this his trying time. In spite of the apparently

utter hopelessness of his situation, "Hope," that bright beacon star, flashed across his mind like a meteor; he coolly weighed all chances, for and against, and prepared boldly to struggle hard for that existence which it had pleased God to give him, instead of losing heart, and through that, his chance of safety.

As midshipman of the watch he was enveloped in a huge boat-cloak (for nights and early mornings are chilly times), and this, unfortunately, it became necessary for him to part with—he could not manage to support the weight now that it had become saturated with salt water and heavy; his other garments would have followed suit, but the idea struck him that clothes would serve him as some sort of protection from the angular points of rock.

Under such circumstances it is altogether impossible to enter into a minute calculation as to the flight of time, what has in fact been but a very few moments appears an age. We ourselves, in a short five minutes, have passed through the principal circumstances of life in review order; aye, and more clearly than we could at this present moment in twice as many hours. In *minutes* at times we live *years*.

Harold at length got well in among the breakers, and having received many heavy blows, he secured a footing, and scrambled up

above the break of the waves, and there he lay panting, breathless, sore, and almost insensible ; then, all immediate cause for violent personal exertion having passed, the accident of the early morning came back to his recollection vividly, and the last piteous cries of the lost, rang in his ears with their full force, and he cried aloud in his anguish, bitterly regretting that he had made no attempt, no matter how useless it might have been, to serve others. Then, stupefied with exertion and batterings in that fearful struggle for life, the wild shriek for Mercy, that had accompanied the sinking ship to the bottom, still rang out in his ears, together with the murmur of rushing waters ; Carrol, Lambert, Spareribs, Higgins, even Boodle and Sextant passed before him. Then came the yearning for food not uncommon in favourable cases, and the anxiety for future well-being became dreadful, insupportable ; all thought of being the only survivor of such a horrible catastrophe for the moment vanished, to be succeeded by a fearful relapse. There, and with limbs benumbed, he laid a prey to the most distressing feelings it is possible for a man to be harassed by, unless perhaps we except *delirium tremens* ; but then the cases are dissimilar, widely dissimilar.

CHAPTER XIV.

HAROLD remained in his position just above high-water mark all that day and all night, together with a large portion of a second day ; his position was dreadful. Boodle's corpse, increased to four times its natural size, had been thrown on shore, the head positively reposing on Harold's knees. Several others were in close proximity, some (as he moved his arms) he constantly touched. Here then was amiserable state of suffering indeed, with no human beings apparently near except dead ones in offensive proximity, and yet deprived of the strength to remove them ; he could just move his arms slightly, and found it impossible to raise himself, he was so reduced.

He still survived, but suffered awfully from the pangs of hunger, having nothing whatever to subsist upon. Through all, when conscious, he appeared impressed with the idea that he should overcome all his disasters ; felt a strong presentiment that he would again return to Old England ; its chalky cliffs would again meet his eye. Ruth was then his guardian angel.

The storm passed away. The sea went down. The sun broke forth and shone brilliantly. Heat was for a time desirable for him, but naturally enough it must not last long, otherwise the effluvia which would arise from the bodies of his poor shipmates would be insupportable.

Suddenly he was aroused by the sound of voices speaking in an unknown tongue, and he was surrounded by a party of men attired variously, but one evidently was acknowledged as their chief. Harold immediately with all his remaining strength gave them to understand that there was a considerable vacuum somewhere, he snapped his teeth like a dying turtle, and speedily a rude sort of flask was applied to his lips by the head man of the party, which had the effect of putting a little life into him.

The bodies of his shipmates were removed from his immediate neighbourhood, and he was once more left alone. As several articles had been washed on shore from the wreck of the brig, the men who had saved his life so far were busily engaged in securing to themselves the plunder, and when all was got together, it formed a pretty considerable heap. They appeared to be well pleased, and laughed and chatted among themselves as though they were the most innocent people in existence, yet they were Pirates, with the curse of the Al-

mighty upon them. Their hand was against every man, and every man's hand was against them. Men were despatched up the cliffs, and beasts of burden were brought, the booty secured to them, Harold placed on top, and then all set out up a precipitous path in the side of the shore. The chief, a fine, tall young fellow, who would have graced an English ball-room, marched alongside of Harold, and appeared even gratified when the lad faintly smiled at him, for as yet he had no suspicion of their calling; the flask was frequently handed to him, and Master Harold began to see two chiefs, everything was multiplied to him, he being in a state of liquor.

At the end of an hour they arrived at a village, and were soon surrounded by fierce-looking men, handsome women, and pretty children. This was their head-quarters, and assuredly well worthy of more honest inhabitants was it, situated in the bight of a pretty little bay, almost landlocked, and which, during a strong westerly breeze or anything from that round to south, afforded excellent shelter for ships. In this bay, riding short, Harold perceived a brigantine of beautiful model, looking as neat and trim as a vessel of war, and further up in the bight appeared the upper spars of a brig, the hull was to him invisible, being shut in by a neck of land—of this, more hereafter.

It certainly struck Harold as somewhat strange that this village should be fortified, for fortifications there were, and pretty strong ones too, overlooking the bay, and culminating in a fort of rude build, but well supplied with guns of all shapes and sizes, taken from time to time in prizes, not first-rate articles, perhaps, but remarkably formidable when handled by desperate men. On the summit of the hill was another fort built of freestone, half fort, half dwelling-house, commanding the bay, so that in point of fact this village was surrounded with means of defence, and there were plenty of men to avail themselves of such means.

Towards this latter building the procession made their way, for it was the residence of the handsome young Chief, and on him devolved the duty of dividing the spoil among his men. No sooner had they arrived than Harold was taken off his fine beast, and being supported again by the Chief entered the building and was placed on a couch in a large room, in which room were seated several women, most of them of great beauty, but very dark.

The Chief called to one who appeared to Harold an angel (a dark one of course), and gave her some instructions, pointing at him, so that he knew himself to be the object of remark, but angels and all else were speedily shut out

from his view, for finding himself reclining on a soft couch, and feeling queer in a room which began to revolve, after winking and blinking like an owl for some moments, he closed his eyes, and was soon in a sound sleep—for the first time in his life the young rascal was drunk. Weak as he now was it took very little to capsize him, he must therefore be excused.

He slept long and soundly, waking up somewhat refreshed, although naturally seedy; the Chief sat beside him, and as soon as he opened his eyes, refreshments were handed to him, of which he partook greedily, and then surveyed the apartment with astonishment at its splendour. Gold and silver lay about in profusion, as though of no more value than dirt. This was a novelty indeed, and Harold marvelled where so much wealth could have been obtained. The deuce of it was, he could not make his new friend understand him, and so was obliged to give up conversation as a bad job. His attempts, however, had caused great merriment among the party, and among themselves an animated debate took place. Perhaps it was as well for the poor fellow that he could not understand, otherwise his feelings towards the Chief would most likely have undergone a material change, for it was to be sold into slavery that he had been saved. The Chief proposed sending him to Tunis as

soon as he was in condition, a relative of his being in want of a slave, but the ladies opposed this measure strongly, and were more disposed to keep Harold among themselves; the good-looking, fair young Englishman had won upon them, and so like a gallant fellow the Chief laughed, and gave in to the fair sex. Harold's welfare now depended on his pleasing them. If he failed there was a good chance of his coming to grief. Somehow or other they must manage to understand one another, if not by language, at least by signs and actions. The women by whom he was surrounded differed materially from those of his own country. They were born under an African sun, their blood was constantly fermenting, so they were fiery and impassioned, in lieu of being cool and collected, as are the Northerners.

Harold had to rig himself out in a loose, handsome dress, peculiar to the country, and obliged himself to be resigned to his fate until the hour for his deliverance arrived; that it would arrive he never doubted, and so kept up his spirits.

After two or three days the Pirate Chief left them, and with the brig and brigantine proceeded to sea. No sooner had he got clean off than one of the women, as crafty as beautiful, age about seventeen, and Tarquee by name,

laid siege with a vengeance, and endeavoured to carry Overdon by storm. It was not to be expected that he would make a very formidable resistance, more especially as boys always are flattered immensely by attentions and caresses from young and beautiful women, but he was taken by surprise and became confused, when Tarquee made her appearance among the others, and as it was always in secret that that young lady made love to the youth, probably she wished to keep her intended *liaison* a secret between themselves. Seeing his confusion she curbed her impatience for the future, and proceeded in a more quiet and systematic manner to gain her own ends.

Leaving Harold pretty comfortable for the present, although in very bad company (unknown to himself), we must try back to gather up the thread of our yarn, and with that object in view, the next chapter will find us in England, staying at the old Castle.

CHAPTER XV.

PASSING through the entrance hall of that old ivied castle mentioned in our first chapter, we shall at length find ourselves in an old-fashioned room, and before our noses three persons are together—two gentlemen and one lady. He who is gravely striding up and down, looking as grim as his ancestors who hang on the walls around him, will be recognized at once as the lord and master of the place—Gascoigne. Buried under the mantel of a vast old-fashioned chimney, with her head resting on an exquisitely chiselled arm, and looking pale and sad, we recognize the Lady Ruth; by the way, we must remark that here we have an example which might lead us to doubt if “Marriages are made in heaven;” for verily we have before us an ill-assorted couple—oil and water. Directly opposite to the lady sat the third occupant of the room, a man in the prime of life, and of pleasing countenance; his eyes of dark blue were fixed with calm expression on the features of the lady, as though he was anxious to read there (without suspicion of his object) the cause which produced such sad effects.

This man was Lord Edgar Galbraith, only brother of the Lady Ruth, who, much against his will, had been obliged to remain for one night beneath the roof of his brother-in-law, on account of the weather, his horse having also cast a shoe during the heat of the chase, and being pressed afterwards, had fallen slightly lame. A man or woman simply entering that room, and glancing quickly around, could soon see how matters stood ; and, most assuredly, that grim, hard-featured man (who passed the fire at every turn like a shadow, and then became hidden from view as he got beyond the radius illuminated by the fitful flame from the huge logs, which became by degrees extinguished, and passed into bright red embers) would be regarded as the ogre who had effectually silenced all parties there present, and who caused the sad, pained look of the lady.

All were silent ; two out of the three sat perfectly still, like statues, fearing to open their mouths, lest something unpleasant might happen ; while the third, with clouded brow, by his heavy tread, alone, broke silence.

Suddenly the door burst open (it must have been ajar), and in bounded a huge mastiff of true English breed ; this dog was very quickly at the feet of his master, and there stood licking his hand, and wagging his huge tail with delight ;

then catching a glimpse of the lady, walked majestically across, and did homage there too. 'Lion' and Lady Ruth were very old friends. This little episode appeared to suit the master of the house; it gave him an opportunity to vent his spleen, and he spoke accordingly :

"Sdeath, madam, is our castle to be turned into a dog-kennel for your pleasure?"

This was asked in no gentle tone, and a stamp of the heavy boot worn at the period, with armed heel, was included, to add to its force; then, seizing a log of wood, he advanced upon the animal, but his course was impeded. Galbraith stood before him, drawn up to his full height, some six feet four inches. 'Lion' saw that something was wrong, and he was immediately ready for action close to his master, who now for the first time spoke as follows :

"Sir Gilbert Gascoigne must permit me to remind him that I will not suffer even a dumb animal to be injured in my presence."

Lady Ruth stepped between them, fearing a collision.

"Surely, Gilbert, you will not kill 'Lion,' for affection to his master brought him here."

"Kill, kill, always kill; just because in a hasty moment I murdered your pet monkey; pray, do not hesitate constantly to harass me with it; while alive, the monkey was unnoticed

by you. I killed it, unfortunately, and now never get a moment's peace." Angrily enough was this said.

"I am sure, Gilbert, you are never reproached with it," answered Lady Ruth, meekly, bursting into tears, which had long been ready, and could no longer be repressed.

"Never reproach me, madam! 'Sdeath, what call you those tears? Is not a woman always in tears a constant reproach to her husband? What can Galbraith think of me, eh, tell me that? Why he thinks me a brute—me, the best of husbands! Wipe up your tears, or on his return he'll see red eyes, and they tell tales. Let others, at all events, be in ignorance of your folly; it is enough that I know your extreme sensitiveness."

We may here just remark that Galbraith, foreseeing a little matrimonial squall, had mizzled with his dog, and perhaps Sir Gilbert was a little anxious to keep on good terms with him. It was not out of consideration for his wife that he wished her to dry her tears—not a bit of it—he cared no more for her than he did for the mastiff; his ungovernable temper had got the better of his judgment, and probably he had already alienated Lord Edgar, a man with whom of all others he wished to be on good terms. He glanced again at his wife; there

was the air of oppression and suffering—the wasted cheeks, dull eyes, and transparent hands; and suddenly he seemed impressed with some strange feeling. After all, there was some affection in him without his knowing it. There is good in all, though none are all good. He was struck with the change which had come over her, and remorse seized upon him. He walked quietly towards her, and gently took possession of one hand. Was it thus? We shall see.

“Sweetheart,” said he, “you are suffering in secret from my brutality; this must not be; we must be happy now. Surely, with all we could wish for around us, it is possible; pardon me for the past, and look forward to the future.”

His wife was astonished at this change; her colour rose, and she clung to him with all her first affection, strengthened; all was forgiven and forgotten at once. Oh woman, woman, well indeed is it for us that such things can be!

“Gilbert, my husband, now I live indeed, and could wish to cumber the earth yet awhile. We have mutually erred; let us both seek for pardon, and start afresh for a bright future. But I am ill and worn now, Gilbert; our daughter, too, has appeared latterly to droop. Let us leave the Castle for a time—go abroad, and amid

varied scenes recruit health and strength." She knew not that he was false, false as hell!

"Be it so, Ruth; to Italy let us go, and wander under brighter skies; it will be my pleasure to watch the return of bloom to those poor worn cheeks. Strange that I should have so long been blind to your state, but God send it may not now be too late."

And so he went on, and she replied. The matrimonial breeze changed suddenly in a gentle zephyr of love. With her it was quite natural, but on his part it was an attempt at justification. He wished the justification of others, and feared a turn-out with Edgar Galbraith, who was a very sensible fellow, appreciating the advantages of birth at just their correct value, and acting up to a code which he had chalked out for himself, strictly honourable, moral, and gentlemanly. Passions he had assuredly, but they were kept in subjection by principle. His principles were firm, and preserved him from inconsistencies, thus rendering him a man apart in society. Ridicule he could and did defy. Now such a man inspired Sir Gilbert, spite of himself, with respect. He might sneer, and talk very loudly now and again, but inwardly there it was. Comparisons are said to be odious; the old knight would suffer extremely by the contrast.

Overdon, the Squire, came nearer, and between him and Lord Edgar existed a feeling of the warmest friendship. We shall see. We have given a sketch of Galbraith in order that the reader may form his own judgment between the two men; he has seen the one quiet and noble, the other inclined to bluster at first, and then to fawn over his ill-treated wife; now we will proceed with our yarn, and record villany and bloodshed. Sir Gilbert quitted his wife on some trifling pretext, kissed her affectionately before doing so, and all appeared well; but that was only on the outside—internally he was even as a volcano—his blood was on fire, and his fingers itched to rid the world of a man he was bound to respect. He calmly put on his hat and cloak, concealing beneath a couple of rapiers, and the whip he used in the chase, and thus armed, proceeded in search of his brother-in-law.

As luck would have it, Lord Edgar felt nettled at the appearance of his sister, changed, as he found her, so much for the worse—the scene with the dog was sufficient for him to arrive at his own conclusions as to the cause, so he sought solitude; he desired to be alone with his thoughts, to vent his spleen on empty air, to avoid an outrageous scene. With this idea he left his relatives, passed through the hall,

and found himself in the grounds, strolling on-wards intent on thought ; he came to a rude seat and threw himself upon it at full length, gazing up at the clouds, and watching their rapid flight, lost to all around him, until rudely awakened by a smart cut which caused him to bound on his legs, and then he found himself face to face with Sir Gilbert Gascoigne, who proceeded to administer blow after blow as rapidly as he conveniently could ; this, you may rely upon it, did not last long, the whip was wrenched forcibly from the hands that held it, and hurled many yards away, in the twinkling of an eye ; but the smart of the blows remained, and on both sides blood was up, with no one near to act as mediator. Sir Gilbert drew from beneath his cloak the two rapiers, and immediately handed one to Galbraith, at the same time exposing his villany, for said he, savagely, " Now, my lord, you must draw on me. I have feigned a reconciliation with the woman who bears my name ; if you fall, her after-life will be embittered ; on the other hand, if I lick the dust, there will be a breach between you ; she will ever remember my last interview with her. Anyhow I shall be revenged." All this came hissing out as rapidly as possible.

Lord Edgar answered, " Before we commence, Sir Gilbert Gascoigne, understand distinctly

how we stand. Without the slightest provocation you have inflicted blows upon me, and now heap insult on insult; before God I swear that this quarrel is entirely of your own seeking; upon your head therefore will fall the weight of consequences."

An angry retort was upon Gascoigne's lips, but he did not utter it. "Measure weapons, my lord, and let us to work speedily, ere the fickle moon withdraws her light from us."

"I am satisfied, if you have a trifling advantage in length, my height and reach qualifies it," was the calm reply. "Take your ground, sir; now are you ready?"

"I am."

"Then defend yourself," and the two swords crossed in a moment; the combatants were pretty fairly matched, the noble had a slight advantage in height; both were men of great power, as shown by their broad, massive shoulders; the knight was an accomplished swordsman, and commenced operations with great confidence, his lip curled with contempt for his antagonist; he anticipated an easy victory.

It is always a very great mistake to underestimate the power of your enemy; and soon Sir Gilbert permitted the contemptuous look to pass away as he remarked the quiet dignity of Galbraith's position and the calm, expressive

eye, together with the easy play of every limb; he found he had caught a Tartar, one able to give him a Roland for his Oliver.

Sparks flew now from the blades as they passed and repassed with lightning rapidity. Suddenly Sir Gilbert started back, his adversary had pricked his shoulder, and drawn blood. Lord Edgar immediately suffered the point of his weapon to drop, but his brother-in-law had now lost all control over himself, and with a biting sarcasm he bade his adversary "come on;" instantly the weapons were again crossed, and both fought with more caution, each had respect for the other's prowess. The knight made several feints, but they were of no avail against a good guard. The noble, anxious to avoid bloodshed if possible, watched for an opportunity to disarm his antagonist; one presented itself, and he availed himself of it; by watching his adversary's eye he saw a lunge aimed full at his heart; with kind intention he caught the blade upon his own, moved forward his arm like lightning, and hitched the cross-guard; then by strength and skill he wrenched the weapon, and Sir Gilbert Gascoigne stood powerless.

Unfortunately Galbraith's good intentions did not avail. Gascoigne was invulnerable, and not to be moved by generosity; he met it with

vituperation and abuse, sprang to the place where lay his sword, and once more commenced a furious onslaught, his mouth foaming.

"Do it again, do it again, if you can," he shouted tauntingly.

"Probably I may not; from this time I cease to play with you; so beware."

Lord Edgar spoke quietly, but firmly.

"Proud boaster, thy vile body shall feed carrion crows, if my good arm play me not a scurvy trick; and that ere long."

At this time, to a close observer, there was a mighty difference, a great contrast indeed, between the two men; one suffocated with rage and passion, the other calm and determined; there was "cold steel" to be seen in Lord Galbraith's eye now,—he looked dangerous indeed; he saw that the knight was intent on killing him, and his own life would very likely be forfeited if he trifled. He had to parry thrusts and lunges quick and furious, and made up his mind reluctantly enough to put an end to the contest. The clash of steel drowned the still small voice that should have been heard. So, after parrying a long succession of wild attacks, Galbraith threw out his arm, and too surely did he strike; the blade passed through Sir Gilbert Gascoigne's chest, the sword fell from his grasp, and he sank to

the ground, cursing horribly his fate. Galbraith drew his reeking blade, and knelt beside the unfortunate man, who appeared already dead; stripping off the clothes until he had bared the wound, he anxiously examined the parts. Like most men of rank at that time, he knew something of leechcraft; feeling carefully along the course the cold steel had taken, he at once knew that the wound was mortal.

“Ha,” he muttered, “through the right lung, several blood vessels, large ones too, severed; he cannot live. I have killed him. Fool that I was to fight with him; yet had I refused, the epithet ‘coward’ would have met me at every turn. What then? Am I not above the ridicule of the world? Have I not always braved its scorn and lived to be respected; true, my fixed intention was to disarm him without injury, and then give him his life. I did so. What then? He would not accept it at my hands, he thirsted for my blood. Oh, God, thou knowest that I laboured hard to spare him; the quarrel was not of my seeking, it was thrust upon me; to have the life of an Englishman, a fellow-being, and above all, a near relative upon my hands, is awful. What have I done to merit it? If death must come by the hand of man, let it be in defence of one’s country; but this, this is indeed a heavy curse upon my memory.” He

placed his hand upon the knight's heart, it was still, all pulsation had ceased, the jaw had dropped, and the face was awful to look upon; the eyes appeared protruding from the head, they were fixed in death; foam issued from the mouth, nose, and even ears, it was a ghastly spectacle. Seizing the knight's cloak, Lord Edgar threw it over the corpse, strode up and down rapidly, then suddenly with rapid strides took his way to the Castle.

He, who laid on the turf stiff and stark, was an officer of high rank—he had enjoyed places of honour and trust under the Crown; but there was a sad lack of principle about him; he had no sooner come into power than he forgot his patriotism, and sought emolument beyond its proper limit. Ambition and avarice were both permitted to rule him unrestrained, and to such an extent as at length to render it incumbent on him to withdraw from office with hands unclean; the good of the nation clashed with his sinister views; there was a whisper even of Traitor being added to his name. A real genuine patriotic courtier is a pillar to the throne, but traitors are its destruction.

CHAPTER XVI.

LADY RUTH GASCOIGNE, now a widow, still sat under the mantel of that strange old chimney just as we left her, pale and sad, for on reflection she saw how little hope there was for her of happiness; without being able to see through her husband, she feared, and it must even be admitted, mistrusted him. Her head was supported by both hands, her elbows resting on her knees; she was nervous now, and uncomfortable; all was not well, neither Sir Gilbert or Lord Edgar had returned to her; she started at every sound, and listened with a frightened expression of countenance, but labouring under the impression that this feeling arose from her indifferent state of health, no servants were summoned; and this loneliness became almost insupportable. At length footsteps sounded through the hall and stopped at her door; that door opened, and her brother stood before her. Then she rose, tottered towards him, and falling on his breast, burst into a flood of tears; that in itself was a relief. Well was it that she was blinded by her tears, otherwise she would have

noted a peculiarly pained expression on her brother's countenance. He saw how fragile she was; knew that a sudden shock at times proves fatal; large drops of agony burst out from his forehead, he was grievously put to it, knew not what to do, what course to pursue. At length a thought struck him; it was now eight o'clock, he would ride over to Overdon and consult with the Squire; but first he must get Lady Ruth to retire, and then have the body brought somehow or another under the roof.

"My dear Ruth, you appear sadly shaken; permit me to ring for your woman—rest will do you good."

"Oh, Edgar, I feel ill; but from weakness more than anything else. I am nervous, too, at present, wretchedly nervous. I'll e'en take your advice, brother, and retire."

Galbraith summoned the woman, and Lady Ruth having embraced him, retired to her chamber. His Lordship then ordered a horse to be brought round, and, refusing any attendance, rode off at a smart gallop to Overdon. On reconsidering matters, he determined to consult the Squire before going any further; as to the body, that could not hurt; many had lain for days on the tented field.

"Being a man of some considerable note,

there must be a sort of formal inquisition as to the cause of his death, I suppose; however, my evidence will throw sufficient light upon the business,—after all, nothing but a very common-place affair in these days of duelling. But the relationship, that's the rub with me—and then my poor sister. I will be all to her that she has lost, and more, too.”

Here his cogitations came to an end with his journey; giving his horse to a groom, he passed into the house, and Mr. Overdon was summoned.

Overdon was somewhat astonished at receiving the message requesting his presence in the library at such an hour, and from such a man. He was filled with apprehension of evil tidings, nor, on entering, were they dispelled. Lord Edgar, with his arms folded tightly over his breast, rapidly paced up and down, with a very troubled countenance.

“Edgar, my good fellow, I am rejoiced to see you beneath my roof, but I fear there is something wrong,” he ejaculated, as with extended hand, he moved towards his friend; but that friend waved him off.

“This is absurd, ridiculous; but, my old friend, I wish to consult you on matters of moment; when I have spoken, if you give me your hand, well and good. Now sit down and listen.”

“ You know that some seventeen or eighteen years ago, much against the wish of her relatives, my only sister, the Lady Ruth, wedded Sir Gilbert Gascoigne, of whom, perhaps, the least said soonest mended ; that marriage, as we expected, did not bring so much happiness to her as she expected it would ; but she has always done her duty to him, and submitted humbly to the will of Heaven, therefore, she was not altogether unhappy, perhaps ; but still, she was far less happy than she had hoped and deserved to be. As to the cause, I, her brother, feel and think a great deal more than I can say even to you, my old and tried friend. I, with the others, tried hard to turn her from her resolution. His precedents rendered me somewhat suspicious as to her future welfare with him ; but love cannot be controlled by the will ; if it were so, we should bestow our affections on worthy objects—reason would be permitted to guide us ; however, it was done—she married, and a coolness sprung up between her and her family ; the rest have passed away, and I alone remain ; Nature spoke for her, and I relented, so much so, as to have decided on renewing our intimacy, yet, with strange inconsistency, I could not bring myself to break the ice. Accident stepped in, and did it for me. Being in these parts to-day, I joined in the

chase, of which I am passionately fond; my horse cast a shoe, the tremendous storm of the morning overtook us, and I pressed him to gain shelter; then he fell lame. Being in the neighbourhood of the Castle I made for it, and so became a guest of Sir Gilbert Gascoigne. Would to God I had kept miles away! Regrets are useless. I saw a strange alteration in my sister, she is a picture of misery, and by keeping my eyes open was soon convinced of the cause, namely, her husband's brutality. When she married, she had a tall, well-developed figure, and was conscious of possessing plenty of strength, activity, and a high spirit; now I saw her, pale, worn, sad, and a mere child in weakness. Passion against him took possession of me, and I left their presence to seek solitude and quiet in the grounds. Throwing myself on a rude bench, I gave way to reflection, and was startled by receiving a blow from the lash of a whip. To gain my feet was the work of a moment. I found myself face to face with Sir Gilbert, who plied his whip with vigour. That could not last. I wrenched it from his hand, and hurled it to a distance. He had evidently sought me, thirsting for my blood, for drawing two swords from beneath his cloak, he bade me take one, and stand on my defence. I remonstrated; irritated as I was, the thought of his

consanguinity would have saved him. He, however, heaped insult upon insult. So we fought. I pricked him on the shoulder, hoping that blood spilt would quiet him, and induce him to desist, but it made him more furious. Again we crossed blades, and I disarmed him, giving him his life. My generosity was returned with vituperation and abuse; he regained possession of his weapon, and came on again. Then it was, that seeing no hope of quieting him, and finding my own life in danger, I determined on putting an end to the conflict between us. His lungs were now more furious than ever; he left his breast exposed, and my sword buried itself. With fearful curses he fell, and now lies where he fell, covered with his cloak. That is the whole truth of the case. Now, my good fellow, what am I to do?"

Galbraith folded his arms, awaiting advice.

"He is dead, then; God save his soul!" said Overdon, as he rose cool and collected, taking his Lordship's hand, while a shudder passed through his frame. "But the Lady Ruth, what of her, how does she bear it?"

"Ah, there's the rub, she knows nothing of it, neither does a soul in the Castle. I induced her to retire early, so for the morrow is reserved the most painful part of this business. What course do you recommend me to pursue?"

"I will accompany you back. To serve Edgar Galbraith, Overdon will do much."

"That feeling I cordially reciprocate," responded Galbraith, heartily shaking him by the hand; then adding gloomily, "if aught should happen to her through this unhappy affair, my remorse will indeed be lifelong; but if all goes well, I shall rejoice at having rid the world of a ruffian."

"Let us pity him, Edgar, he is gone to render his account; he, a man of furious, ungovernable passions, has, under their influence, passed away from among us, and now finds himself face to face with his Judge. As to the Lady Ruth, Mrs. Overdon shall go over in the morning betimes, and break the news; it is a woman's business to soften these matters to woman, it comes more gently from them. All will yet be well, for your sister is a woman of sound judgment and strong good sense."

"Thanks, many thanks to you; this is indeed kindly thoughtful, if Mrs. Overdon should not object."

Overdon was soon ready, and the two gentlemen started for the Castle, arranging their movements as they went along.

"We must communicate the intelligence to somebody, because there is the corpse to be removed; and, now I think of it, we can easily

avoid the principal entrance, for at the east end there is an iron door, of this we must obtain the key; the moat being dry, we can manage to get across all right. This door communicates, by means of the turret stairs (which, by-the-by, are steep and narrow), with the main body of the Castle by means of another iron door of which the key is constantly in the lock; up these stairs then we must go, and trust to our own care for quietness. As to the body, take your groom into your confidence; then we shall be three men with plenty of strength for our work," said Overdon, after a long silence.

"What you, Overdon, you, will you lend a hand?"

"To be sure I will; this is no cold-blooded murder, it is simply the chance of war; you might have been there in his place."

"Yes, perhaps so; well, I will not speak of gratitude; you know as much of my feelings as I can tell you."

Lord Galbraith managed to get hold of the key they wanted, and told his groom as much as it was at all necessary for him to know, enjoining secrecy until the morning, when all would be as wise as he (the master) was at that moment. Mark was a faithful fellow, and to be depended upon; devoted to Lord Galbraith, everybody might sink for what he cared, pro-

vided always that his Lordship swam. Such a man, even in those days, was a jewel; now he would be without price, entirely beyond such a paltry consideration; scarcity enhances the value of an article in demand. If his Lordship had told Mark outright that he had quietly murdered Sir Gilbert in cold blood, Mark would have said, "I know, my lord, you did the thing that was right," and he would have believed firmly what he said, his faith in his master's infallibility was unlimited, and this that master well knew, and so did not scruple to take him partially into his confidence.

The moon had withdrawn her light, but the stars were bright, and gave sufficient for their purpose, more especially as one of the party was so well acquainted with every inch of the ground. He (Overdon) was waiting outside while Lord Edgar sought his servant and the key; he gazed at the grim pile of building, and noted that from Lady Ruth's chamber windows there gleamed simply a dim lurid light that brightened, then waxed faint, as the light from the fire shone more or less brightly through the closed curtains. "She, then, has retired to rest, poor thing!" he muttered, "and yet—why, poor thing? assuredly it is well for her that he is gone. She may now live happily and quietly for many years, whereas he was fast

hurrying her to the tomb; that gentle girl, too, the daughter, what must have been her thoughts of her father?" And as she thus passed through his mind, he glanced towards her apartment, but all the other windows were dark, and looked chilly and cold, and the building altogether appeared a fitting receptacle for the dead. From three small windows alone issued the brightness which spoke of life and warmth, and those were the newly made widow's. He fell into a reverie, from which he was aroused by perceiving the groom and his master coming towards him, and off they all three started at a rapid pace, until they arrived at the top of a slight eminence, when they slackened speed. No man is in a hurry to handle the dead: leisurely they proceeded down a narrow winding pathway, and at length reached the bench, and then saw the outline of the body as it lay covered with the cloak; this covering Overdon raised, and glanced at the face; it was but a glance, with a shudder he quickly covered it again, and the three men commenced their task in silence.

Lady Ruth was restless, although she had retired to her luxurious couch, and wakeful in spite of her anxiety to court sleep. She was a prey to the most bewildering phantasies.

To her the striking of the clock in the tower was something awful, each stroke appeared to go through her; but with all this, although she heard each hour strike, yet the footsteps of those who bore their ghastly burthen did not fall upon her ears, and very fortunately did it so happen; thus far, at all events, all was well.

"He must have been a shocking bad man, my lord, saving your presence," said Mark, as after laying the corpse on a bed the three stood round and looked at it by the light of a lantern. "I never see'd such a expression on a good man's face."

"It is, indeed, a shocking sight, my man," said Overdon, in a low tone of voice. Lord Edgar stood silent, his commanding figure was drawn well up, his arms folded, face pale, lips tightly compressed, his head (a noble one it was) slightly bent as though in deep thought; but the stoop took away nothing from his height, it made him appear more manly and majestic. As he moved to the door his gait was firm and dignified.

"Mark," he said, "you can retire at once to rest; be up betimes in the morning and await my orders."

When his servant had gone he turned to Overdon; holding out both hands, he said, "Overdon, how can I thank you for what you

have done and promised to do ; it is impossible, so I will not make the attempt ; you now had better be off home. I will see you clear of the Castle, and fasten up after you have passed out. My place to-night is by the remains of Sir Gilbert, there to watch till morning. I shall pray earnestly that my poor sister may have strength to meet this trial, but it is a cruel stroke at the hand of a brother. Would to God it had never happened !”

“ Your prayers will be answered, Edgar, and all will be well, that is my conviction ; this was thrust upon you, you had been less than man to have passed it over. To-morrow morning, my good fellow, Mrs. Overdon and myself will both come over early ; this time to-morrow, please God, your sister will know that his removal is a happy thing for her.”

“ God grant it may be so ; but I have sad misgivings ; reduced as she is, this will well-nigh kill her. However, these are useless repinings, mere lamentations over spilt milk—time will show.”

They parted, the Squire made the best of his way homewards, and Galbraith took up his station by the dead. And we must not inquire too closely into his thoughts and feelings during that most miserable of nights ; the clouds had gathered themselves together, those loaded with

active electricity proceeded to charge the passive ones, and much noise they made about it—the forked lightning tore through the air in all directions, illuminating the country round, and penetrating the very room in which he sat, gleaming with greater power than that of the miserable lantern; the wind rose moaning and whistling around the building and through the corridors, hail and sleet pelted against the windows. Lord Galbraith bent his head reverentially and listened, he appeared to recognize the voice of his Creator, as it were, raised in anger against him; he bowed humbly but remained unshaken, his eyes fixed on the features of his ghastly charge; he was a man of strong nerve, that lord: perhaps he was strengthened by a conviction that what he had done was right, for in the course of his conversation with Overdon, he had said, “No assassin ever more richly deserved capital punishment than did Sir Gilbert Gascoigne, because he so ill-used a most virtuous woman—his own lawful wife to boot—that she languished and sorely grieved under her affliction. No assassin could possibly put the person whom he murdered to greater torture than that inflicted by the knight in causing Lady Ruth slowly to die of a broken heart;” or here probably is an example of a man who, having taken a partial view of his own virtues and vices,

laboured under the impression that the former exceeded the latter greatly in his own particular person, and became so prejudiced in his own favour as to turn a deaf ear to reproof and harden his heart against rebuke, although spoken in a loud tone of voice; this, then, may account for his Lordship's nerve on that particular night.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Overdons arrived betimes as the Squire had promised. Lady Ruth had not risen, feeling ill. Mrs. Overdon proceeded to her apartment, while the Squire hastened to join Lord Edgar. After the usual greetings, Overdon said :

“ You appear more like yourself this morning, Edgar, although it must have been a terrible night to you. What a storm ! I thought my place would have come down about our ears, but everything, luckily, held on. My thoughts more particularly were with you, my friend, and a strange circumstance came into my mind connected with your family, which happened many years ago, as far back as my grandfather’s early days. You know that your family and mine have been old allies—”

“ Aye, that do I, well,” said his Lordship, interrupting ; “ let us hear all about this strange circumstance, Overdon.”

“ I’m not quite sure that you will be much gratified when you hear it, but it will, in your mind at all events, justify you in the course you have pursued,” and he inclined his head

towards the body, indicating that he alluded to the duel.

"Let's have it, then, no matter what it is; nothing can come between you and I, old friend; so speak unrestrainedly."

"I must allude to a strange coincidence. The names of the parties were Edgar Galbraith and Gilbert Gascoigne, but the result was different; the injured man fell and the villain prospered."

"Egad, I have heard something of this before, but never could get hold of the rights of the story; people did not or would not know the particulars. Now then, at last, I shall be gratified," and he made himself comfortable, and sat all attention.

"The women of your family are celebrated for their beauty, and I understand that Lady Mary was no exception to the rule; she, with the rest of the family, were residing in Ireland, where to this day is an estate belonging to the Galbraiths, when her beauty attracted the attention of Colonel Gascoigne, the Commandant of the English forces. This officer was feared and hated by the people, his character would not bear inquiry; however, he was a strikingly handsome young fellow, and managed to strike a shaft deeply in the heart of the lady, your kinswoman. The Galbraiths would not listen to

her entreaties on his behalf; they had heard quite sufficient of him, and forbade him to cross their threshold. Although wishing to deal tenderly, I must confess that the lady's romantic disposition led her into danger, and Gascoigne profited by his opportunities; she soon found herself likely to become a mother without the blessings of the Church. This preyed on her mind—all her prayers and entreaties had no effect upon Gascoigne, he positively refused to marry her; and so, finding that she could not much longer conceal her state from her family, she destroyed herself with poison. In her delirium she permitted that to escape from her lips which she wished most particularly of all things to conceal. She died; but the grief of the family was as nothing, they were filled with passion, and Edgar Galbraith, her brother, swore vengeance against her betrayer.

“ Ireland about this time was convulsed with internal dissension. England stepped into the arena with a small force only, and of this force Gilbert Gascoigne was Colonel, besides being a sort of Governor of the town of ——. The Irish objected to being rough-ridden by this force, more especially as those comprising it appeared to strive individually to excel each the other in villany, debauch, and excess of all kinds in their streets; accordingly many plots were

set on foot to drive the English hounds clean out of the country ; one was accepted at last, and an attempt on the Castle was to be made. Several of the higher classes even, hot-headed young men, determined to be in at the death, and among those none felt more capable of doing great things than Edgar Galbraith, strengthened as he was by a thirst for revenge.

“The Commander of the Irish forces was a brave man and strictly honourable, he knew of Edgar’s secret by report, and accepted his offered services most readily, the more so as his soul revolted at such rascality. At length all their arrangements were completed, and one night the gates were opened by the townspeople, and the Irish force passed in, and were immediately dispersed in small parties through the town, awaiting a preconcerted signal to embody and proceed to the attack. Edgar Galbraith and the Commander of the forces, together with a small body of officers, proceeded to reconnoitre.

“‘Ah!’ said Edgar, with an oath, ‘this very night shall the villain Gascoigne find himself face to face with the avenger of injured honour. He has laughed and mocked at our sorrow, he has violated the sanctity of our hospitable hearth, he has spat at us from behind his buttresses; but now the time has come when he shall pay for all. He, the destroyer of my peace, the

seducer of my once gentle and good, but now lost, heart-broken, dead sister, shall find that well-merited vengeance overtakes even the powerful in this world, and hurries them to the tortures which await them in that which is to come.'

"The Commander shuddered as he listened. 'Calm yourself, calm yourself, my friend,' said he; 'at present you are not in a fit state to engage in mortal strife. Remember the battle is not always given to the strong, nor the race to the swift; these feelings, though they may savour of human justice, are yet wrong and improper. Rely on it, in nine cases out of ten they are unavailing; and under their influence we find ourselves worsted. I am somewhat given to superstition, and like not to hear such things on the eve of a struggle. Whist! what is that? Ah! already we reap what you have sown.'

"And in fact it was so. Among the Irish soldiery were many turbulent spirits, anxious to proceed with the work they had in hand. An English trooper had appeared within range, and Murphy had taken a shot at him, with a wild yell. So Edgar and his friends lost their chance for the inhabitants and soldiers were alarmed; the garrison took the alarm also, and opened fire on the town. The Irish forces were, as we have seen, scattered, so townspeople and

Irish troops abandoned the town by dribblets, until none remained. So ended that attempt; but, shortly after, Gascoigne collected all the English troops in the garrison and the provinces around and marched for Dublin.

"The Irish forces had concentrated themselves in strong position at a difficult pass in their line of march, and were soon engaged. The British commenced action by attacking the outline pickets, which happened to be well supported, and the assailants were repulsed, leaving an awful mass of dead and dying behind them. Again they tried the charge, and were driven back by the Irish, who fought like devils.

"Concentrating their forces, with great fury they dashed a third time at the Irish; all in vain, they were met with unyielding bravery, and the slaughter on both sides was tremendous. Unluckily for the Irish their leader fell, and and they were somewhat shaken and wavered, when suddenly Edgar Galbraith dashed out on his charger, and pushed desperately forward toward the English lines. His countenance was dreadful to look upon, for upon it was stamped the working of wild and fiery passions, as he wildly spurred on his charger, waving his sword in defiance towards the English. On both sides hostility for a time ceased, and all gazed at this young warrior with wonder and

admiration ; they admired his sinewy, athletic form, and they saw that his eye was illuminated with all the most ardent kindling of youth and enthusiasm. Gilbert Gascoigne had not noticed him as yet, he was busily engaged among his men ; but one of his officers drew his attention towards him, and immediately he understood the meaning of the defiance. Digging his spurs into his horse he dashed forward without hesitation to meet him, and as he approached, Galbraith checked his headlong career and drew up, preparing himself determinedly for the combat ; their weapons speedily crossed.

“ ‘ You know me, I hope, Gilbert Gascoigne ; and, please God, you’ll know me better before we part,’ he cried.

“ ‘ I do know you, Edgar Galbraith ; poor, foolish boy. However, come on,’ was the rejoinder.

“ ‘ Here’s for vengeance !’ said Edgar, firmly driving his spurs into the flanks of the fiery animal he bestrode, and at the same time making a furious cut at Gascoigne, who warded it dextrously, and being inspirited by a cheer from his men, returned it with interest, laying open the knee and a portion of the thigh of his antagonist, who soon found himself getting gradually weaker through loss of blood ; his horse too had received injury, and began to totter ; however he still continued to ward off the desperate cuts

made at him, and guarded many a fearful thrust. There was no doubt that Gascoigne was the most powerful man at the commencement, and now, his antagonist being much weakened by loss of blood, the disparity was much greater. They had now, in the course of their struggle, got much nearer the English than was quite agreeable to Galbraith, and he collected all his remaining strength for one grand coup, and, by a resistless stroke, broke through Gascoigne's guard, cut down the straps of his helmet, and brought him bleeding to the ground. It was a heavy fall, yet the Briton struggled hard to get on his feet. Galbraith stood by him (for he had dismounted, scorning any advantage).

“‘You are revenged, Galbraith,’ said the Briton, faintly, ‘my life is in your hands; by my actions I have forfeited it most certainly, therefore strike, but let your stroke be sure—keep me not in torture.’

“Do you take me for an assassin, then, that you address me thus? I rode forward boldly to challenge you in fair and equal fight.

“At this moment a cowardly lieutenant emerged from the English ranks, came behind Galbraith and cut him down.

“‘By all the fiends in hell, a most foul stroke. Well art thou called Bastard, thou shalt pay for this. Aye, by heaven, and now.’

"So drawing a pistol from his belt, he sent a ball through his lieutenant's head, and he fell over the fallen Galbraith. The British, who had yelled an execration at such a dastardly deed, shouted with gladness when they saw prompt justice done by their Commander. The Irish, too, were pacified; they could see that the English leader was no cur. Galbraith died without a groan, and Gascoigne recovered; and so you see the termination of their encounter was very different in its result to yours."

"I am glad to hear that chivalry exists even among the Gascoignes, but of a verity your story, friend Overdon, is not over-soothing to me. I like not to hear of faulty weakness in a kinswoman, nor of a kinsman biting the dust in resenting the injury, and wiping out a foul stain. A shriek, ah! now then is my sister aware of what her brother has done. Another! oh, God, spare her—grant her strength to bear this sad affliction."

Edgar Galbraith was unmanned and wept.

Ruth—our Ruth—was at this time on a visit to some friends of her mother's, the Elliotts, who resided at Townsend Park, about six miles from the Castle; and there she was permitted for the present to remain, and in ignorance of the sorrow and trouble at home.

The result of the communication of her husband's death to Lady Ruth was a brain-fever. She never saw Sir Gilbert after their reconciliation, and could now talk quietly about his end. Her illness had taken a favourable turn, and she gained strength more rapidly than could with reason have been expected. At the moment we intrude on her privacy, Lord Edgar was with her alone; he had not long been there.

"I have killed him," said he, "and yet you do not account me a murderer; but how may it be in heaven?" and he looked upward solemnly. His sister hastened to reassure him:

"Certainly not as a murderer, Edgar; why, even human justice could not accuse you of being the wilful cause of his death."

"My keenest and most dreaded accuser is here, Ruth;" and he pointed inwards towards his breast. "But you are not yet strong enough to bear this fatigue. After this, let us not allude to him. Thankful, indeed, am I that you did not die; life will yet smile upon you, now that the chains which caused your misery are severed. I was weary of seeing you suffer, and so broke the spell cast upon you by a man I never esteemed or liked. Your existence for the last seventeen years has been dreadful. You have now a future that you can regard without a shudder."

"Edgar, you speak of happiness, of a future, to a woman who is now alone,—nay, not quite alone, for I have yet a child. These are early days of widowhood and loneliness to speak of such things?"

"I am propelled by destiny, my dear sister, and my duty imposes on me towards you both the duties of brother and guardian in one. Say, then, will you permit me to remain with you in that capacity, or shut up this gloomy place, and come with me to Merry Elms? When I could turn my eyes and thoughts from his inanimate body, I thought of you; reason told me that you could only mourn for him through natural goodness of heart, or the strength of your religion. But yet I dreaded the effect the too sudden intelligence might have upon you."

"Always the same noble, good Edgar," exclaimed Lady Ruth, extending towards him her thin, white hands, while tears streamed from her eyes. "There is only one remedy for affliction, and that is forgetfulness, but I am only a weak woman, and cannot at once commit all to oblivion. But your offer, my dear brother, is indeed a kind one, and I accept it with thankfulness; until, indeed, other ties are formed by you which may render a fresh arrangement desirable. Let us away to dear Merry Elms, for

here I should become cowardly and egotistical in my misfortunes."

"That then is arranged satisfactorily. But now I propose in the first place an Italian trip ; that I consider necessary for both my wards. The Mediterranean at this season is peaceful and quiet. There are vessels constantly sailing from London and other ports, with good accommodation, not like this of course, but clean, wholesome, and comfortable. What say you?"

"We will go," answered she, with a smile of affection on her brother ; "you wish to divert my attention, I see, Edgar, and your affectionate solicitude shall be in part repaid. The rays of pleasure shall beam on this dull and pallid face. We will be happy and calm, as in the days of our childhood. This voyage on that beautiful inland sea will prove beneficial, and enable us to raise ourselves pure from all alloy."

All this was well and bravely spoken on the part of the lady, for although her married life had been one of misery and trial, yet we must ever bear in mind that great as may be the amount of grief, sorrow, and trial all meet with as their portion in this world, none can come nearer home to us than the severance of those ties which we contracted at the altar before God. Cruelty and oppression may have loosened considerably the tie ; still, as long as

life remains it is impossible wholly to divide it. With Lady Ruth Gascoigne remained at all events the fond recollection that she had been a happy bride; up to the time of their daughter's birth they had been all in all to each other. With such a remembrance she could not fail to mourn him; but thoughts would constantly sweep through her brain which removed the first poignancy of her grief. The experience of her connection with Sir Gilbert had taught her to a certain extent self-dependence. He had never impressed upon her the necessity of looking up to him for guidance, except in such a manner as to cause her to rebel; he had served her as the Hottentot women are served—put an iron ring through her nose, and by it dragged her whither he listed; therefore, she was not now a sorrow-stricken woman. In addition to this she looked upon her bereavement, if such it may be called, as the direct act of Providence, and with that conviction she rested easy. It is not for us to say whether she was right or wrong; such is not our purpose; we leave that for the discussor of theology. What we do say is, that the weight of the most awful griefs in this world appear to be thrown upon the shoulders of the best and most innocent, and are borne by them with extraordinary calmness; and there we are prepared to leave the matter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LADY RUTH fast recovered, although at first she had hovered on the brink of the tomb ; then had been the time of trial with her brother ; he was tormented with all the agonies of remorse. If she had changed time for eternity, then indeed would life have been a blank to him. All the servants could see his anxiety, and pitied him. Mark was at his wits' end on account of his master's wretchedness, and often tried hard to get him to take nourishment, or at all events a little air ; anything to get him away from her bedroom door ; but all to no purpose, until her own natural tone of voice was substituted for her horrible ravings. He remained seizing upon the doctors and nurses as they left the room, and pumping them quite dry of news respecting the poor sufferer ; but when he heard her voice and was told that all was well, then a load was indeed removed from off his heart. And he sought the open air ; the house was too confined for him ; he must seek the breezy hills which surrounded it, with no roof save the glorious canopy of heaven.

Then he was admitted to her bedside, and with a portion of what passed we are acquainted. It was arranged that on the ensuing morning he should proceed to Townsend Park, and fetch home his niece. Accordingly, he started. Before he reached the confines of the park, he fell in with a merry party of young ladies, and among them was his niece. The noise of approaching wheels had startled them, evidently in the midst of their enjoyment, and they now stood quiet and staid enough.

"Why, it's my dear uncle Edgar!" exclaimed Ruth. "What can he want, surely he doesn't think me worth coming to look at?"

"Perhaps not," saucily rejoined another; "but you are not the only girl at Townsend. You are handsome, Ruth, but your style of beauty might not suit every one."

"How very grave and serious he looks," exclaimed a third. "But then, poor fellow, he's in deep mourning; that accounts for it."

Ruth turned rather pale, and the party looked rueful; the remembrance of death puts a stopper on mirth. Lord Edgar drew up and alighted, saluting the ladies most politely and his niece affectionately; yet the generous fellow felt queer somehow. Even the silence of the party appeared to strike a damp chill right through him. He had fancied it an easy

task imposed upon him, just simply driving his niece home on such a gloriously bright day. But now he found the matter rather different to what he had calculated upon.

"Did you drive over to see me, uncle Edgar?" asked Ruth, as they walked slowly on, she hanging on to his arm with both hands, and looking up in his face fondly. "Have you been to the Castle, and how are they all?"

"I saw your mother for a few moments this morning, my pet; she has been unwell, but is now all right again; but I have come on an errand for which I am inclined to think you will not thank me; do you know, you are to return home with me?" He did manage to get this out, but he coloured and stammered, and stuttered in a most alarming manner, gave many convenient little short coughs, and altogether behaved badly for a strong man. We are all much like children at times.

"But do you bring me no message, no note, uncle darling? this, with my sudden summons, appears strange;" and a tear started in her bright eyes as she remembered the deep mourning, and a sad thought struck her. "You said my mother had been unwell, but had recovered. Are you preparing me for a great calamity? Oh, uncle, pray, pray tell me all. I can see now that something dreadful has happened;" and

she hung on tighter than ever, her bright eyes lit up strangely and then became dimmed with tears.

“My dear child, you are like an April day, all sunshine and tears. On such a day as this, when our Father smiles upon us and proves how much He loves us, we should all be quiet and happy; whatever betide if we are good ourselves, we may rely on His constant care.” And the uncle looked down on the beautiful face that was raised to his, wondering the while in what way he could best break the news; he felt uncomfortable and unhappy, looking upon himself as a culprit. Perhaps more appeared in his countenance than he wished, for his niece with startling energy said:

“Uncle, now I know why you have come here; my mother—dearest mother! Accomplish your task as you may think best; I know the worst.” And she burst into a perfect tornado of grief.

Galbraith was in for it now; he exclaimed hastily: “Ruth, your mother is not dead, nor is she, I pray God, likely to die this time; she has passed through a cruel ordeal, but is now getting calm and well. Yet suppose indeed that it had pleased God to take her whom he has only lent to us for a time, surely it is not for us to murmur at his taking his own back

again to live among the angels. Now, my dear Ruth, it has pleased the Almighty Disposer of events in His infinite mercy to visit us, and he has taken to himself your father: that then is what I had to communicate. And now, Ruth, my stricken one, you may look upon me as your new father; I will take the place of him who is removed from among us, and endeavour to be all to you that he should have been." He gave a tremendous sigh of relief, and they walked on in silence, Ruth weeping quietly to herself. She felt thankful that it was not her mother, but, in spite of all, she had loved her father. Their walk to the house was very quiet; they walked up the drive; the others had cut across the park, and were already at home. Mark drove very slowly after his master, wondering how he would manage to break the news to the "poor delicate crittur."

At last they arrived at the house; Mrs. Elliott was prepared for something wrong, and waited for Ruth. So after saluting Lord Edgar, the two ladies passed into a room by themselves; poor girl! she was in good hands, those of a genuine English matron. Mr. Elliott and Galbraith shook each other cordially by the hand, and the former led the way at once to the dining-hall, where refreshments were speedily served.

"Permit me to express my sorrow at seeing your Lordship in such deep mourning; several of your relations being among my friends, may I venture without offence to inquire if the deceased was among the number?"

"My dear Elliott, you astonish me; is it possible that the news has not reached even thus far? We have indeed kept this matter quiet, and it is well. Sir Gilbert Gascoigne has slept with his ancestors for seventeen days."

"Sir Gilbert dead! I never even heard of his illness; he appeared to me a strong, healthy man, and, comparatively speaking, very young; bless me, he could not have been more than five-and-forty at the outside."

"He died a violent death at my hands, Mr. Elliott."

Elliott bounded from his chair and capsized his goblet, then quietly reseated himself and waited further information. So Lord Edgar had to relate his story once more.

"I always thought he would end his days in a violent manner; but grieve that it should have fallen to your lot. However there was no help for it, and there's an end of it."

Rather a cool way these gentlemen had in those days of disposing of people, to spit a friend, or send a bullet through him some fine

morning before breakfast gave an appetite; sherry and bitters was not required then as an appetizing tonic.

Well, to make a long story short, Lord Edgar took his niece back with him to the Castle, and immediately set about making arrangements for closing that establishment.

Lady Ruth and her daughter went to Overdon, to stay. There was more life there, and besides everything at their own home was at sixes and sevens. Lord Edgar was busy shifting things belonging to his sister and niece, and packing them off to Merry Elms, while the ladies themselves prepared for their voyage up the Mediterranean, which voyage was now near at hand.

A fine brig was preparing for sea, bound to Genoa from a Scottish port, and in her our friends were to embark.

Poor Overdon was in great trouble now himself; his family had long since grieved and mourned for Harold as lost to them. The father had held out hopes until hope died even within him. No news of the 'Brilliant' had reached the Admiralty; the powers that be had given her up. This was a great blow to the Squire. He had not calculated upon such an eventuality, and so it came upon him with redoubled force, but in spite of all he strangely persisted in keeping up a sort of latent trust in improbabi-

lities, and so had ordered and got ready grand suits of full and half-dress lieutenant's uniform. Seizing the projected departure of Lord Edgar and his party for the Mediterranean as an opportunity, he entrusted this baggage to his Lordship's care, and permitted this simple incidence to revive hope. It is strange how man can persist in hugging hope to his bosom, but so it is, even against calm reason and often "common sense."

CHAPTER XIX.

EVERYTHING was now prepared for the departure, and the eve of it arrived. With ladies in getting underweigh there are a thousand-and-one little things thought of at the last moment. This is looked upon very much as a matter of course, but somehow here was an exception. Edgar Galbraith's forethought had been grandly successful. Nothing was left to be wished for, but then no one can leave kind and good friends without bidding "farewell."

Fare thee well! and if for ever,
Still for ever fare thee well!

Red eyes and pale faces we expect, and if we can, why, we steel our hearts against such weakness; still, there is a something touching about it. We sit around our friends' table, and thought is busy in speculation. This may be the last time that all will meet, and there is a fearful probability that such will be the case. We all know that the old must die, then the young may, and on these occasions we linger over each part of speech, although it comes up indistinctly and with great labour. It is not

by any means a jolly affair that last feast. There are eyes that glisten, voices that falter in bestowing blessings, and hands that tremulously offer keepsakes. All these things must, thank goodness, come to an end.

We could linger fondly over this part of our subject, and swell our volume immensely, but such is not our purpose. We stick pertinaciously to our text, and so, here goes. Passing over tears, the last embrace, the hearty shake of the hand, we arrive at the seaport town, and find Lady Ruth and her daughter under the care of Edgar Galbraith, bag and baggage, alongside of the dashing little clipper-brig 'Glenelg,' under the command of honest old John Bond. Lord Edgar had secured the entire cuddy for the use of himself and friends. He paid handsomely, and so ensured any amount of politeness and attention. Captain Bond was rather overwhelmed, too, by titles. He stared at a real lord as a natural curiosity, and a titled lady as very little below an angel. We cannot say how far that extended to her Ladyship's daughter.

Captain Bond met his passengers at the gangway with his hat in his hand, and kept salaaming and bowing like a mandarin in a teashop, much to the annoyance of the little party, who wished matters to progress quietly, just the same as though they were not on board. So, as soon as

the luggage was all stowed neatly away, Galbraith laid hold of the Skipper by the elbow, and marched him up to the quarter-deck.

"Look here, Captain Bond," said he, "you are master of this brig, and as great a man afloat as a lord is on shore. You keep no watch, you come and go as you please, and certainly no one on board can bring you up with a round turn as long as you do your duty like a man, which I am sure you always will do; you must here be obeyed without question, even as is the case with the most absolute monarch on shore, you have the power to disgrace your officers by turning them off duty, and making each of them do duty as a common seaman in each individual case. Such being your position, in the name of my relatives now on board for the trip, and myself, I beg once for all to request that our presence may not interfere with you in the strict performance of your duty, and also that you will be pleased to treat us in precisely the same manner as you would if we were stripped of rank, and just simply first-class passengers, which you have often carried before, you know. Treat us with becoming courtesy, as you would any other gentleman or lady, and we shall be gratified."

"I can assure you, my lord, that your Lordship shall be obeyed in every particular."

"There you are again, Master Bond, always my Lord and your Lordship. Do you know that the constant repetition becomes distasteful, positively insufferable. To satisfy your little scruples of conscience, when I first appear in the morning you can say, 'Good morning, my lord,' and at night 'Good night, my lord,' just twice in one day; if you exceed your licence, I shall fine you in a glass of grog all round for your crew."

"I'll try hard to think of your wishes, and if I don't please you it shan't be my fault, but you must understand, my lord, that I sticks up for the rights of the aristocracy. I know the difference between a lord and a simple gentleman. Then look at poor Jack Bond, why, he's very low down in the scale, and knows his place, that's more."

"You are an honest man, I know, Master Bond, and that is more than I can say for many lords. But listen to me, you must be taught your lesson once for all, and then you will know how to steer. You have here next in authority to you a Mate, who is also a responsible and respectable man—"

"Yes, that he is; no better man breathes than John Tallentire, though I say it myself. What shouldn't, my lord—beg pardon, sir," interrupted the old Skipper.

Lord Edgar smiled and shook his head warningly, and then proceeded :

"He is in point of fact your prime minister, and those under him must respect his authority, so that when you tell him what you wish to have done, he has to give his orders and see that they are to be obeyed. Well, to him we extend the same privilege, if privilege it may be called, and perhaps you will kindly notify the same to him, at the same time impressing upon him the necessity for its strict obedience."

"Well, surely, sir, you are most condescending for a great lord, and her Ladyship, too, and her Ladyship's daughter."

"Tut, man. We estimate the advantages of rank at just their correct value. Men, because they are not lords are not serfs necessarily, and I tell you, Master Bond, that it must be as I have said ; it will add greatly to our comfort ; and further, you have here a junior mate or officer, what call you him ?—yonder short, thick-set, but withal good-looking man of open countenance."

That's Rogers, my Second Mate, as good a sailor as ever trod a plank—his berth's no sinecure here, sir, he's neither altogether officer nor man, and yet a little of both ; he lends a hand when necessary, and it often is in bad weather, and then he's boatswain too, and keeps the

locker, sarves out what the men want in their work, and so on. Generally, you know, my lord, I mean sir—in these small craft he's got a hard lot, leads a sort of dog's life, but here with me, being a relation of mine, why, he messes with me, and I makes him as much to be respected as possible, by keeping him as much from the men as circumstances will admit, and by-and-by, why, I'll give him a first mate's berth, when I make Tallentire captain, 'cause you see, my lord—sir, I should say, this barkey's my own, so I can do pretty near as I like with her."

"Very good; then we will include Rogers also—in fact, you will understand just what we wish without a long rigmarole, and no doubt our voyage will pass off pleasantly enough. I know something (not much certainly) of nautical matters; the look of the vessel pleases me. She is very neat and clean. I cannot say much to your face, or you'll be vain, but I like your appearance, and that of your two Mates. The sailors are smart-looking fellows; they seem extremely partial to that black man; no prejudice of colour among the noble sons of the ocean, eh?"

Bond in his turn now smiled—he knew all about it, and thought his Lordship rather green on that point.

"Why, that black man happens to be the cook, and has a great deal in his power. If

Jack minds his helm, and keeps in the proper order of sailing with him, then they can get their clothes dried now and then, and light their pipes, and so forth, in the galley; but if Jack don't mind his course, why, then there are no little favours granted."

"Oh, I see, rather out of my reckoning, eh, Master Bond, not quite as disinterested as I thought; now tell me who is that smart dapper-looking fellow with the white trousers and blue jacket, and yellow buttons—a bit of a wag in his way, I dare swear."

This man had just arrived alongside in the jolly-boat.

"That's my steward, my lord—he has charge of the pantry, 'tween he and Tallentire and Rogers there's a sort of quiet civil war. Charles looks upon himself as my particular servant, and don't recognize Tallentire at all, and as the Mate likes naturally to have all on board the ship except me, under his control, why they don't quite hit it. Well then, Rogers sticks his head into the pantry sometimes; there he's got no business to go, and so there's occasionally a sheevo. I never interfere, because Charles is quite able to take his own part."

"Now, when do you sail, Master Bond? Directly that anchor is off the ground, my fines come into operation—so, look out."

"I'm afraid we shall hardly get right away to-night; besides, now I think on it, why, it's Friday—now that is really what I call real unfortunate, to think that you should embark on such a day; perhaps that's done the thing already; no, I don't start tack or sheet to-day—to-morrow morning at daylight it'll be up stick and away."

"Then we sleep on board to-night, but may as well be off on shore for the remainder of the day?"

"As you put it as a sort of interrogatory, my lord—that is, sir—I think you may as well stop aboard; you can get your things to rights, and get accustomed-like to your future home for a few weeks."

"Perhaps you are right, at all events I'll away below and find out how the ladies are getting on, and whether anything is required from the shore."

"Embarked on a Friday," thought Galbraith, as he passed below; "what the deuce can the old fellow mean? Superstitious, I suppose; fancies all manner of things supernatural; can't for the life of me see what difference a day in the week can make. He does not like it seemingly; pooh, pooh, this is puerile; I'll try and cure him during the voyage—a nice little amusement for me."

CHAPTER XX.

SATURDAY morning arrived in due course, and Captain Bond got underweigh, as he had said, at daybreak. His passengers were up on deck; their present position was something novel, and besides, they wished to see the last of the port of their embarkation—a very natural weakness, and pretty general. The anchor was run up; there was a nice little breeze, with smooth water; the wind there was being off shore, and so the ladies, with a certain amount of comfort, could watch the operation; to them, at all events, the scene was new. Galbraith had on former occasions trusted his valuable carcass afloat, and therefore he understood sufficient to be able to explain each movement. The top-sail yards had been mastheaded, sails loosened, and let fall, sheeted home—jib set, to pay her off, and the headyards braced up with the same object—the anchor hooked up by the cat-block, and the brig payed round rapidly—topgallant sails set, and she moved off in style, and as easily as possible. All these manœuvres Lord Edgar explained to the best of his ability. We

cannot stay at present to recapitulate; we say what had been done, and any Jack among the reader's friends can explain. The anchor was fished, and very shortly studding-sails were set, every sail being well trimmed, decks swept, ropes neatly coiled down; then came the operation of mustering the men aft, in order that they might be formed into watches: in the brig there were two, commanded by Tallentire and Rogers—port and starboard watch respectively. This taking place immediately under the eyes of the ladies, they naturally wished to know the meaning of it—why, wherefore, and so on. So Galbraith had to explain about the division of time on ship-board, watch on and off duty; the dog-watches he found difficulty in explaining; probably he was not quite up in his subject. These matters are simple enough to the initiated, but somewhat puzzling to the landsman. He was soon relieved from his catechism as the brig got out clear of the land, and hauled up on her course. She became somewhat lively—too much so for the comfort of Lady Ruth and her daughter. Master Bond and Lord Edgar handed them down, and then returned to the deck; the latter was much pleased with the honest Skipper, and also with Tallentire, who was now on the quarter-deck by virtue of his position as officer of the watch;

his Lordship's dog 'Lion,' too, appeared to think the Mate a worthy companion, for he made overtures not to be mistaken; but this dog became a general favourite with all—was made honorary member of every mess, and really appeared scarcely conscious of the difference between Merry Elms and the lively little brig 'Glenelg.'

For the first week or so the ladies remained almost close prisoners, but at the end of that time they threw off the chrysalis, and became butterflies, looking just as happy and contented as though domiciled in a palace; now, here we may remark, a sure sign of blood—snobs are never contented—all cannot with them be right; do what you will, they grumble and growl; all efforts you may make for their comfort, they take as a matter of course, and still growl. Whatever we do, wherever we go, come what may, let it be in company with "blood"—save us from "snobs and snobbism." And where will you find more than at headquarters? Not among the aristocracy; don't mistake. We remember a little incident that occurred to John Woodburn's father; he was entrusted with some verbal communication for the Commander-in-Chief, and on presenting himself at head-quarters, was received very much in the usual manner by one of the many

useless understrappers, who insolently informed him that they could receive no verbal communication; whatever he had to say, he must communicate in a proper manner by an official letter—a pretty thing, indeed, for a general officer to be told, and in such a manner by such a person. However, some few days afterwards Woodburn had a dinner party in his tent (for they were campaigning), and just in the middle of the dinner the host, officers of the staff, and other dignitaries were much astonished by a donkey shoving his nose into the tent, and braying right merrily. Woodburn rose immediately (and very quietly) from his chair.

“I presume, sir,” said he, addressing the ass, “you come from head-quarters; but I beg to inform you that I receive no verbal communication whatever, sir; if you have anything to say to me, sir, be good enough to indite an official letter.”

We have heard a great deal about the longevity of asses; probably the reader has been annoyed by the bray of the same animal lately in connection with “Naval” matters in high places. We do not assert this as a fact, but verily we are inclined to the belief that the “identical” has found his way among our tentropes, and exerted his vocal organs in an unpleasant manner. But to return to the

‘Glenelg.’ Our friends had amused themselves by watching porpoises jump out of the water, reading all the books they possessed and those Master Bond could supply them with—talked to each other until each was talked out, and finally sighed for new scenes, new objects, new faces—anything new, in fact. Edgar, with ladies under his charge, could not smoke and doze over his wine all day long. They had passed rapidly down the English coast, and sighted Ushant, passed through Biscay’s Bay—all well—and looked out for the Straits of Gibraltar. Captain Bond and his two mates rose rapidly in favour with the party, and now sat at the same table; they were fast becoming a very happy family, in spite of a little wholesome awe of high rank. And now there came a drawback to their comfort; an able seaman, Edwin Harris by name, sickened and died; this little circumstance capsized old Bond’s little stock of philosophy; he shook his head gravely, and muttered something about embarking passengers on a Friday, and allowed the matter to prey upon his mind. Harris was buried with all honours in due course, and the same night appeared alongside of the Skipper as he walked the short quarter-deck, and took his fisherman’s walk with him. Bond was scared, but rubbed his eyes to see clearer, and close to

him, sure enough, there was the seaman; too frightened to speak, the old fellow dived down the companion, and rather startled Lord Edgar, who was sitting at the table, reading by the light of a swinging-lamp.

"What the devil's the matter with you, old fellow? You look rather frightened. Upon my honour, I could almost laugh in your face; but probably it may be no laughing matter. What is it? Speak up, man, and keep your teeth quiet."

"Why—why do you know, Ned Harris walked alongside of—of—me, just now. I saw him as plain as I see you, my lord."

"My lord, eh! All hands splice the main-brace! Caught you at last, Master Bond. Well, all right; you and Harris walked together. A quiet companion enough, I dare swear. What of it?"

"What of it," returned Bond, coming to himself. "Why, a heavy gale, shipwreck, ruin, death,—and all through your coming aboard on a Friday."

Galbraith could contain himself no longer; he laughed long and loudly, very much to the Skipper's disgust.

"It's cruel of you, sir, to laugh at the misfortune of others, although may be you'll go too. Do come on deck with me, and try and persuade him to leave us in peace."

"By my soul! Master Bond, I am not disposed to give way to you in this matter. If, as you say, he walks the deck (although I do not hear his step), why, let him walk it till he's tired; and, mark you, do not molest him in any way, or he'll take it into his head to follow you about everywhere, and that may not be agreeable to you. If he takes the weather—you can pace on the lee side. Keep your eye on him, and see that when he dives he takes nothing of ours with him; that's all."

Old Bond spurred up rather at this, and fired off a little bounce.

"I don't care more for my life than you do, my lord—that is, sir. But these supernatural visitations rather palls me, and that's the fact. The Friday business don't mend matters, so that altogether I am pretty considerably consternated; but as sure as you sit in that chair, we shall have trouble, and plenty of it." And the old man brought his fist smartly down on his open palm.

"Then we will not meet it half-way, Master Bond. When it comes we'll meet it like men; but until then we really need not disturb ourselves. Bah! man, you have suffered this matter to impress itself upon you, until really you are like a child, and as easily frightened. Look here, I am about to take a cup of wine,

you can take one with me ; and while Charles is getting it on the table, go you on deck, and request the man Harris to come and join us in rum."

Away went the Skipper, full of confidence as long as he remained in the light with his Lordship ; but as soon as his head got above the companion, and he heard the wind moan and whistle through the cordage, the old feeling returned ; however, the fear of shame gave him the pluck to look round cautiously. Nobody was there but the man at the helm. So far well, at all events.

"Who's that steering?" he asked, and his voice sounded queer.

"Bill Light, sir," answered the helmsman.

"Anybody been up here lately, Bill?"

"Not since you went below, sir. Mr. Rogers is overhauling the standing jib, forward."

"Then you and I have had the deck to ourselves, for the last hour?"

"That's right enough, sir. None of the passengers arn't showed up, although it's a beautiful night."

And a beautiful night it was ; the breeze just fresh enough to keep the sails full, and let the brig make tracks on an easy bowline. But Master Bond's mind was rather weak, and wanted cul-

tivation ; anything conjured up supernaturally to his thinking deprived him of immediate resource in himself ; and if such things *really were* followed up by danger and calamity, as a *sequitur*, why, men of his calibre would come to grief.

However, finding that Harris's fetch had disappeared, the Skipper, after casting an eye aloft, proceeded to join Lord Edgar over a cup of wine, and took the roasting he guessed was in store for him good humouredly enough. Poor fool, he deserved castigation.

Lady Ruth and her daughter sat in a moderate-sized state-room, which had been roughly fitted up as their sitting-room, and our friend Harold Overdon was the subject of their conversation. To the daughter it was a subject painful enough too, for she had clung to the sweet dream of her youth. She had given up her heart's best affections to him who was now (they thought) no more. She had never altogether recovered the shock given her when first she heard of the 'Brilliant's' mysterious disappearance, and there was reason to fear that the first seeds of consumption were now sown on fertile ground. She had enjoyed her dream of loving and being beloved, and that now being destroyed, why, her heart appeared to collapse—

she shrank within herself, and for her there was no possibility of forming a new attachment ; it is so with some, whatever the worldly may say.

“ Poor Harold,” said Lady Ruth, “ he was a noble-hearted boy, and would have shone in his profession ; but, alas ! regrets are unavailing.”

“ You have then, with others, given up all for lost, dearest mother,” said Ruth, with a half-suppressed sob.

Lady Ruth looked steadily for a few moments at her daughter, and then said, mildly :

“ My darling child, what am I to think of this emotion ; is it possible that you have yielded your heart hopelessly ? This is indeed grief to me, but you are still young, Ruth, and have little knowledge of the world ; this beautiful Italy, whither we are hastening, will effect wonders in you, my precious child.”

Ruth wept, and gently shook her head ; then, putting an arm round her mother’s neck, she said, “ Must I then speak out to you, dearest mother, even the plain truth ? ”

“ Certainly, dear Ruth ; of all things let neither concealment nor deceit come between us ; ” and the mother looked alarmed.

“ Well, then, I think I am hastening, not to Italy, but to another country far more beautiful. None can tell, my own mother, what Harold has been to me ; he never knew, and now never

will know. If he has gone beyond the stars I will follow him ; something tells me that we are shortly to meet. Surely, since he is gone, it can alone be in spirit."

It was the mother's turn now to weep, but the daughter smiled, and a beautiful expression came over her countenance ; with the faint tinge of peach-blossom on her cheeks, she was indeed a lovely invalid. Can it be possible that we have never described her ? Let us hasten by all means to the best of our ability. Now, at this time she was between sixteen and seventeen years of age ; a graceful maiden indeed was she, and perfectly ladylike, the symmetry of her slight yet beautifully moulded figure was perfection, as near as mortals can aspire. Her countenance was bright as the noonday sun, her fine dark eyes were costly gems, bewitching indeed. If Harold could only see her now, his heart would be won unalterably. There was dignity, ease, and elegance. She was beautiful ; her face perfectly oval, complexion a soft yet rich brunette, features small yet not classically regular, but then we all know that irregular features are often so pretty, piquant, and altogether enchanting in their animated and arch expression as to be a thousand times more winning than though they had been a model for the most faultless piece of sculpture

that art could conceive. Her head had been shaven a few short months before on account of fever, and now the hair appeared short, like that of a boy. It was glossy, abundant, and of a rich raven-like blue-black ; being parted on one side, it swept above the full brow in a shining curve, curling under and around the temples in splendid profusion. This careless and somewhat peculiar style of wearing the hair added immensely to the soft and sparkling beauty of her face. Can you not now imagine, that with the rich vermilion tint of her lips, the small, regular, and exquisitely white teeth, and the peach-blossom on her cheeks, she was a regular beauty? Then the dark brilliancy of her splendid eyes—oh ! hers was indeed a countenance wondrously fascinating.

We are very fortunate in our heroines, because, of course, if they had been ugly and vulgar, we should have been in duty bound to chronicle accordingly, and then how much of interest should we be compelled to sacrifice ; after all, we are led away by beauty ; deny it as we may, it will bias us. And now, having in this chapter touched on snobs and snobbism, let us bow to blood, and end with a little bit of advice ; it is this : “ Choose always the company of your superiors whenever you can have it, that is right and true pride.”

CHAPTER XXI.

MASTER BOND, although somewhat reassured, was still remarkably stubborn on the Friday question; and ever since he had taken it into his thick head that the "dead and buried" had walked with him, why, he looked out for squalls, certain that his brig was a doomed craft.

The 'Glenelg' passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, and the land appeared distinctly before them, being beautifully relieved by the intense azure of the cloudless sky. Joy came upon all, the exhilaration of our friends was excessive; even Ruth managed nicely to get upon deck with trifling assistance from her uncle, and took a look at the "rock" so grim and bold; but still a cloud, a dense black cloud, rested upon Captain Bond, and in vain did Lady Ruth, Galbraith, and even our Ruth, address to the superstitious old zealot words of comfort and encouragement: nothing would thaw him, he was frozen up in the icy rigidity of despair, and could only thank them in a tremulous tone of voice for their kindness. Day and night the old man watched with little or no intermission.

He knew not from what quarter to expect danger, and yet danger he knew to be hovering over them. Strange, that !

For once it may appear that there really is something unlucky in sailing on a Friday ; but, in fact, it is simply superstitious absurdity on the part of weak-minded men. Certain it is, however, that on the second morning after leaving the rock, a very suspicious-looking brig hove in sight from the deck of the ‘ Glenelg.’

Master Bond looked at her with all his eyes, and pronounced very unfavourably as to her character ; turning to Lord Edgar, he said moodily :

“ I told you how it would be, my lord ; my words have come true, there is our danger. Yonder brig is now making sail in full chase of us, and she is a pirate.”

“ Ha ! say you so, Master Bond ; then I must look to my charge,” answered his Lordship, coolly ; and he at once proceeded below to the ladies.

“ Now, my dears, look here ; there is a vessel in sight which may turn out an enemy ; you must open the chest entrusted to me by Overdon and don the uniforms ; we must for a time do away with false delicacy. Rest assured that I act in accordance with my judgment, and would not recommend such a proceeding without being

certain that it will avoid unpleasantness to you both, and probably insult, though that could only reach you after I had been laid low."

He spoke so quietly, and with such a pleasant countenance, that they thought he was joking, and right merrily did they enter into his pleasantry. He soon induced them to rig themselves in their new dress, and two handsome fellows they looked. Lady Ruth had to sacrifice her profusion of hair, and they found out that this matter was no joke. Her Ladyship at the first proposition of hair-cutting had thought the joke quite far enough advanced, but Edgar made no bones about the matter; he seized a pair of scissors, and commenced in a business-like manner, as though he had done nothing but shear sheep all his life. Lady Ruth now submitted quietly enough.

"Why not tell us of our danger at once, Edgar? For myself I care nothing, but for you and this precious child assuredly I tremble—what then do you fear?"

"Fear? nothing! but I have misgivings as to the honesty of purpose actuating a man at present in command of a vessel now rapidly approaching us in full chase, and therefore, as you may remark, am exceedingly anxious to make myself look pretty formidable."

And sure enough he did look formidable,

with a belt stuck round with pistols, to say nothing of a heavy hanger, which he wielded as though it were a witling or a switch.

"Now let us strike all this woman's dunnage down the hold," he cried; and not content with words, himself proceeded to action. Who shall say what were now the feelings of Edgar Galbraith?

"Ah! who can tell? not thou, luxurious slave,
Whose soul would sicken o'er the heaving wave;
Not thou, vain lord of wantonness and ease,
Whom slumber soothes not—pleasure cannot please.
Oh! who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide;
The exulting sense—the pulse's maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way?
That for itself can woo the approaching fight,
And say with courage—God defend the right!
That seeks what cravens shun with more than zeal,
And, where the feebler faint, can only feel—
Feel to the rising bosom's inmost core,
Its hope awaken and its spirit soar?
No dread of death—if with us die our foes—
Save that it seems e'en duller than repose:
Come when it will, we snatch the life of life;
When lost—what reck's it—by disease or strife!
Let him who crawls enamour'd of decay
Cling to his couch, and sicken years away;
Heave his thick breath, and shake his palsied head,
Ours the fresh turf, and not the feverish bed.
While gasp by gasp he falters forth his soul,
Ours with one pang—one bound—escapes control.
His corse may boast its urn and narrow cave,
And they who loath'd his life may gild his grave;
Ours are the tears, though few, sincerely shed,
When Ocean shrouds and sepulchres our dead."

On deck Lord Edgar found all hands determinedly preparing for a scrimmage under the direction of Master Bond and his Mates. Bond was no craven now, here was nothing supernatural; but he maintained that Harris had foretold disaster, therefore he looked not for victory. Simply determined on a manly resistance, he smiled at Galbraith, and involuntarily exclaimed:

“Of a surety thou art somewhat formidable, but my heart hath its misgivings respecting the ladies and their safety.”

“Be of good courage, Master Bond; we have provided as far as laid in our power against dishonour; at all events the ladies are arrayed in man’s apparel, and must e’en sham sickness for the nonce. I see our enemy approaches; my trusty weapon will not long remain idle. Mark you, Tallentire, single out the officers, if yon buccaneer hath such cattle; I promise myself pleasure with her chief; and now one word of re-assurance to my young officers in the cabin, then we’ll to business;” and he proceeded below.

“He is a lord and no mistake, sir,” said Tallentire to Bond, as Galbraith retired.

“Aye, Tallentire, and will deal a lordly stroke with that sword of his, - it’s more than I could wield, hardly lift; but we are in for it, my mate, and ne’er another sun shall we see set

—it's dance on nothing, or else walk the plank, and neither do I much admire."

"Rot and damn them both, say I, but ours is a sturdy crew, and we are not children, sir. All may be well yet. At all events there's nothing lost by trying."

"There goes a gun. If he comes that game long we shall escape, for our cruisers will be attracted by the noise, and flock together to divide the spoil."

Hand-over-fist the pirate overhauled the 'Glenelg,' yet she was walking pretty cheerily too. No doubt existed of her character, for she had hoisted her colours. Bond now showed his, and yet the pirate fired gun after gun, much to the honest Skipper's disgust and astonishment, for positively he had cherished a latent hope that there should lay a sort of charm in England's colours—a fallacy too gross to be admitted.

Tallentire and Rogers were busy loading and firing some carronades, of which the brig possessed three, but scarce in serviceable order. However, all helped to make a noise, and that was something. Neither vessel had yet hit the other. Indeed, they almost seemed content to dash the water 'tween them into foam, but as the distance was lessened, the 'Glenelg' got hulled, and then the splinters flew about

in all directions. So near had they now got to each other, that the sound of voices could be heard. Then came a crash as the pirate ran alongside. This brought Lord Edgar up, and just in time to meet the Buccaneer Chieftain as he sprang on board. A fine fellow in truth was he. It seemed a pity that two such men should meet in mortal strife. All hands were soon engaged, but so outnumbered as to leave no chance. Old Bond, brave Tal-lentire, and Rogers, all had fallen. The Skipper had already slipped his cable, his two Mates were badly wounded, yet still Lord Edgar and the sailors persevered ; the black cook dealt destruction with his red-hot poker till he, too, fell. Lord Edgar's foot slipped in the gore, and he lay powerless. The Pirate Chief stood over him, apparently wrapt in admiration at his fine face and limbs. Each looked at the other, and each was pleased, for, after all, a pirate may be noble-hearted though steeped in crime. This may seem a paradox, yet is not quite. We cannot stop to ventilate the subject.

A shout aroused the Chief, and, looking in the direction noted by his men, he saw the lofty spars of a heavy ship under a press of sail steering apparently directly for them. Here was no time for plunder or destruction, yet they tried the latter by throwing some loose canvas

on the galley fire. This ignited, and raised a cloud of smoke. Lord Edgar was made prisoner, taken on board the pirate brig, and she made sail.

The stranger, coming up before a fresh Levanter, rapidly rose her hull, and seeing how matters went, set studding sails so smartly as to leave no doubt of her quality. She was an English ship-of-war, and nobly did she bear Old England's banner. Within an hour a boat from her touched the 'Glenelg's' side, and a lieutenant, followed by a dozen seamen stepped on board, and here an awful sight awaited them.

Tallentire, weak though he was, and bloody, assisted by the few survivors, had luckily managed to choke the fire in the galley, but as yet had no time to mend the appearance of matters on deck. There lay poor Bond, with his head a little on one side; his eyes were closed. Apparently he slept, and so he did—the sleep of death. He had been shot, and must have died a painless death, because the features were composed and quiet, not contorted as in agony.

Rogers looked horrible, so did the other dead, among them several pirates.

The Lieutenant addressed himself to Tallentire at once.

“What brig is this, sir, and how came you in this state?”

"We have just been engaged with pirates. I suppose they saw your ship approach, and so made off; a d—d good job, too, I'm thinking."

"What brig is this, sir?"

"The 'Glenelg,' John Bond, Master, bound to Genoa."

"Is your name Bond, may I ask?"

"No, sir, my name's Tallentire, very much at your service. There lies honest Jack Bond, as dead as herrings, herrings red. I was his Mate, and now I s'pose am Master, but how the devil I'm to get her to Genoa after those picarooning vagabonds have been and polished off pretty nigh all my crew, why d—n me if I know."

"Probably we may be able to assist you, my good fellow. However, come bear a hand, because I'm in a hurry. Had you any passengers?"

"Why, yes, blow me, that we had. What a d—d unnatural beggar I must have been to forget 'em. There were three, Lord Edgar Galbraith, Lady Gascoigne and her daughter, two most beautiful women they were, too; and as to his Lordship, why he was a lord and no mistake, every inch of 'en."

"And where are they now, my friend? I presume Lord Edgar is among these poor fellows; but where are the ladies?"

Just then a naval officer in full uniform made

his appearance from the companion. Tallentire rubbed his eyes and stared like a conger-eel. A crack in the head had somewhat confused him.

"Why, here is his Lordship, safe and sound—in uniform none the worse for wear. A pretty lord, by Jove, to be skulking among the women while such work was going on! A brother officer of mine, too; damme, he's a disgrace to the cloth."

"Vast heaving, shipmate—that ain't his Lordship; it must be one of your fellers!" said the Mate, looking hard at the apparition.

The Lieutenant turned pretty sharply round to resent the affront, as he took it, but Tallentire seemed suddenly to remember all that had passed; so, slapping his thigh, he says:

"Now I knows all about it; why, that's one of the ladies—his Lordship dressed 'em up as men, so that there might be no familiar liberties took with them; I s'pose he thought there was pirates enough already without adding to the stock."

The officer, or rather disguised lady, had dived again, so the Lieutenant desired Tallentire to let the ladies know that an officer from His Majesty's ship 'Ruby' was on board, and solicited the honour of an interview. Meanwhile the frigate had ranged up pretty close,

and hove her maintopsail yard to the mast. Captain Darby had his telescope levelled on the 'Glenelg,' when Lady Ruth peeped out.

"Hullo," he said, "damn it, there's something wants overhauling here; they may weather on Bowden, so I'll be off myself."

Darby accordingly jumped into his gig, and was very soon on board the brig—in fact, before Tallentire had returned from the cabin.

"Ah, Bowden, terrible work this; what a slippery mess she's in; these chaps must have died game, eh? Now you may observe, sir, the truth of my constant assertion—an English sailor never says die till he's dead, and then it's plenty of time." Bowden turned to, and informed his captain of all he had heard from Tallentire.

"Galbraith? why, he's an old friend of mine—travelled in Spain with him years and years ago—poor fellow—but I don't see anything of him here," and the Captain proceeded to turn up the faces of the dead with the toe of his boot,—"no, none of them come near him; why Edgar was a giant, and a deuced handsome one too; where the deuce can he be?"

Tallentire now appeared, and informed them that the ladies would be glad to see the officer from the 'Ruby.'

"I'll go down, Bowden; you return on

board ; we must now see what's to be done ; don't lose sight of that gentleman who has obliged us with such a delightful panorama as this deck presents at present, and directly the ' Emerald ' heaves in sight, direct her to chase."

The Post-captain descended, and his entrance was effected in a most distinguished manner. There was no mistaking Captain Darby for anything but a well-bred gentleman, in spite of quaint ideas. The reader probably remarks, "*a rara avis* in those days, at all events, as a sea captain." To this we can only say, "that we feel delighted at being enabled to introduce such an one, and that he was one out of many equally entitled to the distinction."

The ladies received him, as we may expect, in a quiet and dignified manner ; there was no simpering at their unaccustomed costume ; all was as easy and natural as possible.

Captain Darby commenced, after having paid his respects, by "regretting the sad catastrophe of the morning, and congratulating himself upon having indirectly and quite promiscuously disturbed the buccaneers, and thus probably saving them (the ladies) from a violent death—at all events, much inconvenience."

Lady Ruth made a short statement of facts within her ken, and anxiously inquired for her brother.

"Unfortunately," answered Darby, "I cannot at present relieve your extreme anxiety, but from one circumstance I augur favourably; he is not on board this vessel, and therefore I infer that being a magnificent looking fellow, they have made him prisoner, hoping to make something by him."

"In what way, may I ask?"

"Either by selling him into bondage at Tunis, or by extorting a large sum of money by way of ransom; strange as it may appear, I know this has been done by this pirate through a Tunisian merchant who is related to him. He is said to be averse to the shedding of blood, and severely punishes wanton cruelty; however, we shall, in all probability, know more of him before long, as I am about to attack his stronghold with the 'Ruby' and 'Emerald.' The question now is, how are we to proceed with regard to you, ladies? I need not assure you that my cabin is at your disposal, but then in action it will be unpleasant and inconvenient to you."

Lady Ruth was plunged in deep and painful thought about her brother, but just managed to catch sufficient to reply by a query:

"Is it not possible for this vessel to proceed to Genoa?"

"Assuredly; as far as the brig is concerned,

she has sustained no injury worth mentioning ; but the Master has fallen, and therefore the Mate will take command. I will make up her crew from my own ship."

"Alas, I fear this affair has been indeed disastrous ; but we must act promptly ; now is no time for vain regrets. Is the pirate's stronghold far hence ?" demanded Lady Ruth.

"With this breeze within eight hours' sail," answered the Captain.

"Then if Mr. Tallentire will be good enough to proceed with you as near as prudence permits, we will remain on board the 'Glenelg,' and wait until Lord Edgar joins us again."

"Your Ladyship has confidence in King's ships and their officers, and I assure you it is to me most gratifying," said Captain Darby, and a proud smile lighted up his countenance ; "proud have I ever been of my command ; from this day it will increase."

"Confidence !" exclaimed Lady Ruth, "aye, unlimited ; I know them to be invincible, and that they nobly uphold the unstained honour of our glorious flag."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ladies and Captain Darby ascended to the deck (we omitted to mention, by-the-by, that the bodies had been removed forward and covered over, and the deck well soused in order to wash away as many signs of recent strife as possible, by order of the Captain, before he descended), and the latter immediately called to Tallentire, and entered into discussion as to future proceedings; the 'Emerald' had hove in sight, and was now in full chase; the survivors of the brig's crew were busy preparing the dead for burial.

"We'll get way on the brig now, Mr. Tallentire, and edge down towards the frigate; from her I can spare you a few hands, and as we jog on we can discuss this matter. Coxswain, return on board, and request the First-Lieutenant to send six men here: let him follow us in with the 'Ruby.'

Accordingly the 'Glenelg' stood down for the frigate, Tallentire himself steering, and when near enough rounded to, took on board the men, filled again, and followed as near as pos-

sible in the wake of the 'Emerald'—the men from the 'Ruby' set sail after sail, and very shortly the little brig, under a cloud of canvas, was making tracks to some purpose; in fact, the 'Ruby' had quite enough to do to hold her own; as the wind then stood it was the 'Glenelg's' best point of sailing.

"Now then, Mr. Tallentire," said Captain Darby, "you understand the wishes of your passengers; the only question is whether you consider such a mode of proceeding as antagonistic to the interests of your owners."

"My owner's gone aloft, I humbly hopes, sir, seeing that poor John Bond called this brig his own, and he engaged to carry his passengers to Genoa. I knows his ideas perfectly well; if he'd remained below he'd a-done it, therefore as I'm now Master, it's my duty to do as he'd a-done, and so I will, or my name's not Tallentire."

"I am sure, Mr. Tallentire, that we have much reason to be grateful to you, and it shall be our concern that you lose nothing by it," said Lady Ruth.

Tallentire shuffled about with his feet in a most restless and uneasy manner, and at last managed to summon up pluck enough to speak out.

"Can I have a word with your Honour in private, cause a matter lays heavy on my mind,

and as we're slipping in handsomely, why I may soon lose my opportunity."

The two ladies took the hint, and topped their booms out of earshot.

"Certainly, my friend, speak out," answered Captain Darby, wondering what the deuce was coming now, "an English sailor always has my ear, and never yet have I heard anything from them of which they gave me reason to be ashamed."

"Well, sir, you know as how we've got some shipmates aboard as has slipped their cables, and as they've always done handsome-like by me, why I should like to do the same by them, and give 'em a honourable funeral, and if so be your honour will condescend to give 'em a little of the Book, why, your humble servant will be grateful."

Darby was rather pleased than otherwise with the new Master, and most cordially agreed to perform the last ceremony over those who had fallen doing their duty honourably and bravely.

The 'Glenelg' kept the lead admirably, and Darby, thoughtful for others, congratulated Tallentire on her performance, but could not altogether help glancing somewhat pettishly at his own ship, as he took each short turn with the ladies. The 'Ruby' was not a gem in speed.

Ruth, our Ruth, noticed this little look of annoyance and drove it away instantly. "We know very well, Captain Darby, that speed is only a *sine quâ non* with the French in a ship of war—the English ships are officered by gentlemen who have no desire to run away, and if they do require a fast ship, why they take one from their enemies." Darby raised his hat and bowed; he found these little compliments from such sweet lips extremely pleasant; in light *badinage* the time passed away; they were now drawing near the land; the 'Emerald' had hove to, and four small flags appeared at her royal mast-head—the 'Ruby's' answering pendant broke at hers almost immediately, and so they kept on for some minutes.

"Relieve the Master at the helm, Roe," said Darby to one of his men, "and now, Mr. Tallentire, if you please, hoist your ensign at half-mast; let the bodies be brought to the gangway, and we'll proceed with the ceremony. I must away on board the 'Ruby.' Then walking up to the ladies he said, "Lady Ruth, we are about to pay the last sad tribute of respect to those who have fallen, therefore probably you will choose to retire; my time with you now, I regret to say, is short, in two hours we shall be engaged." and he levelled his

glass, scanning the shore narrowly; if we may judge by the play of features, the examination resulted very much to his satisfaction.

"Retire! nay, on the contrary, we too will join in this sad ceremonial; it is indeed a small matter on our part, on behalf of those who have fought for us, and lost their lives, as it were, in our service."

Darby ascended a few of the rattlins of the main-rigging, and waved his telescope; his signals were understood. "Now back your main-yard, Mr. Tallentire, if you please," he shouted, and very shortly within her own length of the 'Glenelg' the 'Ruby' rounded to, and both ships laid without motion of a progressive kind. In obedience to Darby's order the frigate's ensign came down half-mast too, and the sullen boom of a gun reverberated over the waters. Captain Darby, the ladies, Tallentire, and the men assembled at the gangway, and the solemn ceremony was conducted with becoming solemnity. As soon as it was over Captain Darby hailed for his gig, and having spoken a few parting words to Tallentire, and reassured the ladies with a lively hope of shortly embracing Lord Edgar once more, he stepped over the side, and proceeded to his ship, which immediately filled, and stood on towards the 'Emerald,' apparently keeping

up a lively conversation with her by means of little gay-coloured squares and triangles of bunting; the brig shortened sail, and jogged on also.

An officer (probably the Captain) from the 'Emerald' boarded the 'Ruby,' and after about twenty minutes' stay returned to his own ship; then the 'Ruby' led, and the 'Emerald' followed. Lady Ruth asserted that she heard distinctly the tap of the drum, and perhaps she did, for assuredly they went to quarters on board those two ships.

Those on board the 'Glenelg' watched them until they passed from sight in rounding the headland of the Pirates' Bay; then dinner being announced the ladies disappeared, and the new Skipper availed himself of the opportunity to get the dead pirates thrown overboard; it went against his conscience to have the service read over them, so they were bundled in anyway, with scant ceremony.

By remaining on board the 'Glenelg' now, dear reader, you will not see the fun, neither will you hear such a full and particular account of Harold; because it is not likely, even if he should be all safe and sound, that he will make a clean breast of it; therefore we propose hoisting our flag *pro tem.* in his Majesty's ship 'Ruby,' first taking the precaution of shoving

the 'Glenelg's' nose the other way; that is, standing off shore; not that we would pass a vote of want of confidence in the new Skipper, but in this world there is nothing like timely precaution. We know it is of no use to lock the stable-door after the horse has escaped, and then another wise saw telleth us that "safe bind" is to "safe find."

CHAPTER XXIII.

WE all know that the Mediterranean hath been noted from time immemorial as the scene of piratical depredations, the numerous creeks and shallows of that beautiful sea affording great facilities for the sudden ambuscades of buccaneers; ensuring, as a general rule, a speedy and safe retreat from the possible pursuit of a superior force. At the particular time chosen by us in this particular book, the depredations and atrocities of these lawless gentlemen had really assumed a most serious aspect. They had grown bold and daring from the mere fact of being allowed to proceed from bad to worse with seeming impunity. Moreover, the strength of their retreats, often rendered strong by nature, their determined character for obstinate bravery, made any attempt of an attack upon them a matter not to be lightly undertaken; it was not simply a question of pluck, for no small amount of judgment would be required for anything like an attempt likely to result in success.

The reader may in this particular instance

form some notion of the danger attending this enterprise, when the character of the situation which their entrenchment occupied has been more fully explained. It was, as we have already said, in the bight of a pretty little bay, which, during a strong westerly—or anything from that backing round to south—wind (and we might perhaps even go further, but prefer remaining within the mark) afforded security to ships. The ‘Ruby’ entered this bay then on a most beautiful afternoon in June, and Captain Darby was much struck with the appearance of the place, which he proposed to attack. Close after him came the ‘Emerald,’ so that the two captains, with their officers and crews, had ample opportunity of seeing that their work was cut out. Captain Darby did not expect to find regular fortifications, and now he beheld a series of them culminating in one apparently strong fort, well supplied with ordnance; whilst moored close in-shore, lay the brig and a brigantine. Flanked and protected, as it were, by a small low neck of land, about half a league from the landing-place, these two vessels were all clear and ready for action, and from the bustle which was manifest on shore, they were all busily preparing to give the frigates a warm reception. The worst of it was, these piratical craft were so disposed as to render it impossible to injure

them without coming within range of the whole of the fire from the land force. Captain Darby had made up his mind to proceed to the attack; he was determined to do or die. He now knew well enough how truly formidable were the difficulties with which he had to contend; and perhaps the worst part of the business was the neck of land which flanked the vessels, because the water was found to shoal so rapidly as to render it hazardous to attempt a much nearer approach with such large ships. The deep silence and unnatural quiet, peculiar attributes of a British ship-of-war just previous to an engagement, is something awful; each individual appears charged with peculiar anxiety; thought is, as it were, turned in upon itself, and friends and home which might never again be seen, press hard upon the heart of many a brave man; throbbings of strong affection towards wives and children, parents and relatives, give birth to many a deep and involuntary sigh. Let us not, reader, run away with the idea that these are the feelings of cowards; not a bit of it! rather of brave men—the bravest of the brave: for cowards love to put thought away from them by every means in their power, and often seek courage in the wine-cup; the brave man, on the contrary, looks a-head, ponders on consequences, seeks to arrange matters quietly

for the future welfare of his family according to the extent of his capability, or as circumstances will admit.

Darby was not without thought ; he made his arrangements ; then, multiplied and great as were his difficulties, he was quite ready to meet them, feeling himself fully equal to the occasion. Many a poor fellow had seen the sun rise that morning, that before he set would be laid low.

The 'Ruby' having run in sufficiently close, hauled up ; every man was at his station, and all moved about with becoming alacrity. The 'Emerald' followed the motions of the senior naval officer, and both ships were "ready, aye ready."

The 'Ruby's' were called aft, and Captain Darby addressed them thus :

"My lads, you see before you the stronghold of a set of piratical villains, to whom rape and murder are mere pastime. From yonder fort there floats a flag, which most likely they are accustomed to douse at sundown ; we'll douse it for them to-day, and their fort too. Sailors, you have your work to do, and, my boys, I know every man of you. You'll do it in style ; you all know my opinion of a British tar : now then, three cheers, and to your guns ;"—nothing comes up to a short and pithy address.

At three o'clock that afternoon, the 'Ruby'

let fly the first broadside, and almost simultaneously the 'Emerald' opened fire. Then the engagement commenced in real earnest. Darby so disposed of his ship, as to be able to work both broadsides with effect; and terrible indeed was the execution they did: havoc and confusion soon became apparent on shore. Darby called his Senior Lieutenant.

"Now then, Mr. Bowden, off with you; we must take advantage of the smoke, and effect a landing. Take the launch and pinnace; we can afford forty seamen and a dozen marines, and the 'Emerald' must do the same; there is plenty of shelter for you, and it is most likely you'll escape observation. When you see three rockets sent up, make at once for the breach which we shall have effected. Away you go. God bless you."

Forty volunteers for the boats were deuced easily procured; in fact, where all were so anxious to go, it became difficult to make choice. Many a good man got turned back, and so found his temper a little ruffled; but as soon as the boats were off, they vented all their ill humour on the enemy.

For three long hours did this fearful castigation continue. Shot flew about as thick as hail, and as many from the shore fell short of the ships, they dropped pretty cheerily among

the boats as they pulled in, but luckily without doing much mischief.

Rather a more serious accident happened, however, which might have proved particularly disastrous, but, somehow or other, that they managed to escape the ill-effects of,—the strongest fort in possession of the pirates, that at the foot of the hill, blew up with a thundering crash.

Bowden, in anticipation of the rockets, dashed in with renewed vigour. The boats flew through the water, so anxious was he to take advantage of the bustle and confusion. The boats grounded, and the party of seamen and marines from both ships effected a landing without opposition. The walls appeared to totter under the effects of the shot, and each minute made the breach more apparent.

Up went the three rockets hissing like snakes, and the orders given for the storm were received by Jack with exultation, and he rushed from his place of concealment, and made for the breach with alacrity. Sharp work was by all of them undoubtedly expected, but then victory (and, perhaps, a faint hope of plunder and booty) was not for one moment to be doubted.

Then came the grand hand-to-hand struggle. Those guns from the shore having ceased to play on the ships, the ships ceased firing also. In fact

now, such pepper was likely to season their own men rather too highly for the Captain's palate.

Having ceased firing then, and wanting the two piratical vessels destroyed also, Captain Darby gave orders for the yawl, barge, and cutter (the former fitted up as a gunboat) to proceed immediately, and the 'Emerald' was signalized to do the same. So away they went happy-go-lucky. Every man gave way with a will, and those remaining on board the frigates cheered them as they went. Not long were they in reaching the tongue of land, and to get round it was the work but of moments. Then they made out the hulls of the vessels, and before they had given many strokes the brig opened fire, and the shot bounded over the boats and knocked about the waters in style; showers of grape and canister fell around.

"A little cold steel won't hurt them beggars, I'm thinking," said an old salt.

"And the sooner we give it 'em, why the better for all our healths, my beauty," answered another.

"Silence there," shouted the officer in command, who had fixed his eyes on the brig, and noted her ports open, boarding nettings triced up, and sundry other little preparations for a most determined resistance.

"Why, these devils may be named 'Legion,'"

thought he, "they can offer resistance on shore and afloat at one and the same time;" but he said nothing, not he. Officers on boating expeditions are not usually magpies.

As they neared the vessels the shot from the brig came in regular showers, buzzing about their ears like swarms of bees; it became a question whether each moment all might not find themselves in eternity.

However, it had the effect of making our tars dash onwards with redoubled vigour. At last those boats told off for the brig arrived alongside in spite of grapeshot, and boathooks were pretty soon made fast in the chains. Jack, headed by his officer, was not long in scrambling up the sides, cutting and forcing through the boarding nettings. It is, we believe, the peculiar characteristic of the English seaman to board, in spite of great guns, small arms, or any other impediment. What would be deemed desperate by men of any other nation is as natural as mother's milk to Jack. Surely, there must be a sort of inherent affection for this sort of work in him, because we find him positively volunteering for it. Death may stare him in the face,—no matter, give him once foot-hold, and while breath remains in his body he never despairs. There, is the spirit which bids defiance to danger manifest.

Now, these fellows on board the brig were not taken by surprise. There was no stratagem. They had every advantage, and it would almost be in vain for us to endeavour to describe the conflict which ensued on deck. It lasted for nearly an hour, and at close quarters, too, for after the first discharge no fire-arms were reloaded, but just simply shied slap in the face of the adversary; it was arm to arm, cutlass to cutlass. The eternal clash of steel, added to the horrible groans and imprecations, showed it to be a bloody and desperate affair. Each English man-of-war's man seemed struggling for his life, and striving hard to terminate that of his antagonist. We say, in speaking of our countrymen, man-of-war's man, because, alas! others from the same free country were there fighting with halters round their necks. We cannot enter minutely into detail. Those who have taken a turn at this sport will perfectly understand the wild, frantic, horrible expression of countenance. We think there must be something diabolical in our natures.

The pirates on board the brig greatly outnumbered our friends, and how the conflict might have terminated it is impossible to conjecture. Each party had been sadly punished, and blood literally streamed through the scuppers, but at this moment a reinforcement ap-

peared over the bulwarks. The boats told off for the brigantine had returned.

Beddingfield, the Lieutenant, who had command of those who had stood all the hammering, no sooner made them out than he with his men made a rush aft as far as possible on the quarter-deck, thus placing the enemy between the boarders and themselves. This measure was most obstinately disputed, and the slaughter was something frightful, but the men who came fresh into action had now got on board, and the enemy were mowed down like blades of grass, and tried hard to escape by jumping overboard; but retribution for previous misconduct speedily overtook them, and they were cut down without mercy. Generosity and humanity are close allies with magnanimity and true courage, but pirates meet with no quarter,—they are without the pale.

All on board the brig had now gone to their long account, there remained not one alive. Beddingfield, anxious to get some liquor to moisten the lips of some of his poor fellows, descended to the cabin. A most sumptuous apartment he found it. Reclining on a sofa, was a fine handsome man, evidently an Englishman, apparently asleep. Had sleep been possible through such an infernal din? But advancing towards him, Beddingfield noticed that he was

fastened down and gagged, to say nothing of a stream of blood which slowly trickled down his face. To release him from his unpleasant position, rub his hands, and moisten his lips with some spirits he saw on the table, was the work of a moment, and very soon he had the satisfaction to observe evident signs of returning animation. From loss of blood the man had gone off without power (from being bound) to help himself to brandy when he first found faintness stealing over him.

“Who are you, sir, and how comes it that I find you in such a strange position and on board such an infernal craft?” demanded Beddingfield.

“My name is Galbraith, sir, and only since morning have I been here. Are you an officer from the frigate, or whatever she was, that hove in sight this morning, while we were defending ourselves against this very vessel?”

“I have the honour to be a lieutenant of his Majesty’s ship ‘Ruby.’”

“‘Ruby,’ eh? Why, surely she is commanded by my friend Darby, is it not so? But first of all tell me about the ‘Glenelg,’ did you see anything of her, or did you at once chase the pirate? I am anxious, having relatives on board, and near ones too.”

“The ‘Glenelg’ is standing off and on out-

side this infernal bay, and all well as far as passengers are concerned; she waits only for you, I believe, sir, if, as I presume, you are Lord Edgar Galbraith. As to your former query, my Captain is named Darby, and our First, Bowden, told me, that in you, Captain Darby had recognized an old friend; but I must do my duty, our loss here on deck is something heavy, what it is on shore, God knows."

"I feel weak, stiff, and sore, but have nothing particular the matter except a little cut in the head. By George, we must act the part of good Samaritans, and look after the wounded; here are handsome bottles in plenty, and full too, that's more. Come, sir, you're wounded, I perceive, drink first with me, and then let's away on deck."

In truth Beddingfield was wounded in two or three places; he had nobly done his duty that day and deserved rest, but unfortunately when on particular duty we cannot always afford to rest. Such was the case with our friend, his orders had been to burn and destroy at once. The brigantine had been set fire to, and now blazed cheerily; but he determined on sparing the brig for the present, and so ordered the sound men into the boats, to take her in tow. The little wind there was now drew off shore, so the foretopsail was set,

and gradually, by means of the boats and a little assistance from the topsail, the brig had good way on her with English colours flying. Beddingfield then recalled the towing-boats, got the men on board, passed the boats astern, and paid all attention to the wounded. A boat from the frigate 'Ruby' now came alongside, Darby, anxious for his men, was in her.

"Well, Mr. Beddingfield, what report have you to make?"

"Our loss has been very great, I'm sorry to say, sir; ten killed and fifteen wounded, at least four hopelessly."

"Ah, that's bad; give me a rope, I must come on board. Galbraith, my old friend, that's you, I'm sure. By George, I'm heartily glad to see you—deuced near a bad job with you, eh? Your friends are all well outside; but, excuse me, my poor fellows require my attention."

The brig anchored close alongside the 'Ruby,' and we really must leave her there; we dislike hospital work, and for the present Esculapius will lord it supreme.

Let us return to the storming-party, under First Lieutenant Bowden. The fort, which the pirates had deemed impregnable, was blown up, but yet they showed no signs of knocking under.

The Pirate Chieftain (the same who had crossed blades with Galbraith) kept his men well up to the scratch; he was here, there, and everywhere among them, just as a leader ought to be; his tongue kept constantly going, like the clapper of an alarm-bell violently rung—doubtless he was exhorting his men to continue steadfast in his cause, as much for their own sakes as for his, because a hempen neckcloth was all they had to expect in case they were vanquished. Moors and Spaniards (that is, the cross) are distinguished for their fierce valour, and for a remarkable contempt for death, as much as those further to the eastward of them are for their cowardice and soft effeminacy; and supposing their discipline to have been equal to their pluck and ferocity, why, the issue of this event might have been slightly different to what it was. Labouring under disadvantages, they rushed on valiantly, met the storming-party, and after each repulse repeated their assaults with redoubled fury; those who fell there and then, died like wild beasts, positively biting the cutlasses of their enemies.

Fortunately enough they had not the stamina of our English seamen, and so were dislodged and driven from their post. They had calculated on the effect of the sun too; they being habituated to the climate had an undoubted ad-

vantage ; but Jack is an awkward customer in any climate, and so he resisted each violent assault, and maintained his position with steadiness, easily repelling the foe. All the seamen having tailed on, commanded by their officers, at the breach, Bowden led on to the assault, and the slaughter became prodigious. Bowden well knew that in more straitened circumstances, and in situations more trying than the present, British arms had been triumphant, and had purchased victory in the very jaws of annihilation ; so he persevered. Now, although to a military eye, after the first glance, this place might have appeared incapable of resisting an assault of invincible English tars, yet, let us tell the Reader, to the Post-captains in command of the frigates, men of keen penetration where the interests of the service were concerned, it appeared altogether in a different light ; they saw that all the energies of its numerous population were very powerfully roused to the determination of a resistance even to death, and so looked upon their cause as perilous and doubtful as at present, although, as a matter of course, never hopeless ; that word "hopeless " no Post-captain worth his salt in the service can find in his dictionary. Under these circumstances each ship sent a reinforcement of fifty men, commanded this time by Captain Darby in person ; these fresh fellows

landed full of pluck, they had not borne the heat and burden of some hours' fighting on shore, and so were ready for any mortal thing, more especially as they were commanded by one of the first men of his day, with whom we take great liberty in placing him here under the fictitious name of Darby. Well, these fellows had their road very plainly marked out for them as they travelled over the bodies of friend and foe indiscriminately, and at length closed with their main body. Of course the Lieutenant immediately gave up his command to the superior, who took advantage of a battery which had been deserted, and turned the guns immediately upon the enemy. Night now closed suddenly in upon them, and they had to make their dispositions for it; sleep for all was out of the question, so it became a matter for watch and watch.

The pirates kept up a desultory cannonade throughout it, but made no sortie. Jack, far from being dismayed by a resistance so obstinate and destructive, appeared to gain rather than lose courage, and kept his position firmly, looking forward with confidence to the morrow. But we must not imagine that with the English it was an idle watch, far from it; they had their work to do in making good their parallels, and ensuring a free communication with the shore;

and, in fact, putting themselves in position, if they found it necessary, to batter the place at daylight.

Morning dawned, and with that dawn came a renewal of the fearful conflict. The pirates had retired now to the building, half fort half dwelling-house, that we have before mentioned, therefore the English advanced upon it, and here a contest, almost unexampled for fury, took place; for the pirates, seeing their fortifications no longer tenable, determined to make a conclusive effort, and, if that failed them, to retire and take advantage of their free communication with the country. They made a sally, then, and were routed. Darby and the Chieftain crossed blades. The Post-captain had hitherto borne down all before him, but now, in making a heavy cut at the Chief, he missed him, and found himself immediately obliged to let go his cutlass in order to regain his perpendicularity; being thus disarmed, he was obliged to seize his enemy with one hand, while a little middy, who happened to be close by, shoved his dirk into the other; this became a wrestling match, both fell to the ground, where they laid, each struggling hard to be uppermost: the pirate was the most powerful, it would appear, for he gained his point, and seizing Darby's throat was preparing to make a final thrust,

when the Captain drove the dirk well in up to the hilt just beneath the armpit, and uttering a groan the buccaneer fell over. This, then, ended the affair; the few who now remained seeing their Chief bowled over, and being overcome by fatigue and numbers, surrendered themselves, and were at once made close prisoners. The victorious sailors were now anxious for plunder, but by Captain Darby they were held in subjection, and given to understand that all must proceed in an orderly manner; he told them that their wounded would be a first consideration. To give Jack credit, this he readily agreed to, and, under command of a lieutenant, they carried their wounded down to the water-side, thence to be conveyed on board their respective ships, 'Ruby' or 'Emerald.'

Meantime, Captain Darby with half-a-dozen men entered the fort, and commenced an examination, proceeding cautiously for fear of treachery: in one of the apartments, stretched out most unpleasantly, spread-eagle fashion, well fastened down and gagged, appeared a young man of perhaps nineteen years of age: they expected to find that he was dead, but far from it, on the contrary, he was all alive, and would perhaps have kicked but for his thongs. This chap was no sooner released and ungagged, than he capered about in a most extraordinary

manner and thanked God most audibly for his deliverance. Darby and his men were astounded to see a young fellow, gaudily attired in Moorish costume, so jolly under the circumstances, but when they heard him speak out in their own lingo, their eyes opened, and their jaws fell alarmingly.

"What the deuce are you? Who the devil are you? How the devil did you get here? And where the devil are you bound now if the wind holds fair?" exclaimed Darby, laying hold of him the last time, for he appeared inclined to bolt, but as he quieted a little, and seemed harmless, he soon let him go, standing between him and the doorway. No sooner had he let go, than the fellow spun round like a teetotum and fell heavily to the ground.

"Strip him, and see if he's hurt," ordered the Skipper.

"No, sir, he ain't hurt, by no manner of means, outwardly; but here's a sort o'lock o'hair; so I 'xpects he's hurt inwardly," said an old quartermaster.

"Oh, I see, some love affair or other, eh?—blue ribbon—R. G.—black hair?—hem. Just clothe him again, and carry him gently down; here's a case for the 'fatted' calf, or I'm much mistaken."

"Fat calf; Lord, sir, he don't look much like

it now ; a few duff-days will do 'en a world of good."

Having collected an enormous heap of treasure and valuables—in fact, pretty well stripped the place—it became necessary most effectually to destroy it, and so a mine was sprung, and the whole affair by degrees was blasted. Jack dearly loves destruction—that bump must be very largely developed with the majority—however, fortunately it happens that Jack is under command. "He who labours with the mind governs others ; he who labours with the body is governed."

CHAPTER XXIV.

When we dwell on the lips of the lass we adore,
Not a pleasure in Nature is missing;
May his soul be in heav'n—he deserv'd it, I'm sure—
Who was first the inventor of kissing.

Master Adam, I verily think, was the man,
Whose discovery will ne'er be surpass'd :
Well, since the sweet game with creation began,
To the end of the world may it last.

WE left Harold in pretty comfortable quarters ; he being in happy ignorance of the character of the place, and truly he must have been quick-witted to understand it, as all hands appeared to strive to keep him in the dark. Wherever he rambled some one or other accompanied him, and never failed to lead him inland ; truth to tell, he was rarely unwilling to be led whithersoever his guide listed, for that guide was sure to be of the opposite sex, and pretty if not beautiful.

In the fort Harold's chamber was an exquisitely fitted apartment, and suspended from a brazen bracket was a rough but masterly sketch of a woman, doubtless intended for the Madonna. Our young friend took it into his

head that this picture somehow delineated clearly and faithfully the features of Ruth Gascoigne, and neither morning or evening did he fail to kneel beneath it—read a portion of a Bible which he saved, because it was a parting present from little Ruth, and afterwards continue his devotions in the same attitude for a brief space, keeping his eyes fixed on this picture; at length he positively worshipped it, and remained almost exclusively shut up in his apartment, rarely stirring abroad. One day, while he was sitting at his window, with his head buried in his hands, deep in thought, a gentle tap was given on the door, and a friar entered. Harold had heard or read of the Spaniards being good Catholics, and being aware that several of that nation were about the village, and, indeed, many domiciled in the fort, he thought it nothing strange, and therefore politely saluted the holy father, who seated himself, and immediately spoke:

“Although the world, my child, is bad, and impregnated with vice and folly, yet here in a somewhat isolated position, apart from evil, methinks it is churlish for a man to be so totally wrapped up in himself as to live in utter seclusion; rest assured that man was naturally intended for society, and therefore, however little he may be attached to the great world, he

never can wholly forget it, or bear heroically to be forgotten by it."

"I had thought, holy father, that the duties of your religion condemned you to solitude, and am surprised to hear you thus speak."

"You are full young, child, to have these ideas; solitude in moderation is well for us all, provided that we give an undivided attention to those weighty matters which influence us all, but you must be blind indeed to the happiness of your situation if you envy the solitude of a hermit's life."

"I have much to think of, father; here, in an unknown place, away from all that I hold dear—looked upon as one dead by them, and mourned bitterly when a line from me would turn all into joy; is not this enough to make me think seriously—aye, and grieve too—young as I am?"

"All that you hold dear! Holy Mother, would that thou hadst never come within these walls." And the friar reclined his cheek upon one of his hands, and apparently he wept, but that Harold could not see on account of the cowl which was drawn over the face. The youth looked upon him in silence, wondering what would come next, and yet there was pity in his eye; probably he thought the father insane. The father slowly rose, and caught the expres-

sion. "Ah! you then pity me, and pity is akin to love;" then rending her garment aside suddenly, she threw herself upon his neck, and clung to him tenaciously, at the same time covering him with burning kisses. Harold knew then that it was Mara, the Chieftain's favourite daughter, and, truth to tell, he was frightened, and found himself utterly incapable of uttering a syllable—rather a dangerous position, considering the sudden changes from love to hate in these impassioned women; however, she appeared violently smitten, and appealed to him, imploring him not to abandon her to despair; that she sighed for the possession of his heart, and did not lust for the possession of his person. She felt for him love, not licentiousness; and then to prove it, we presume, she sat down on his couch, drew him towards her, and placed her head in his bosom. Of course we cannot expect him at such a moment to remember Ruth. No, he yielded to temptation. He pressed his lips to those which sought them; his kisses vied with hers in warmth and passion. Claspings her in his arms, he forgot all but pleasure and opportunity.

It is not our purpose to follow him right throughout the period of his captivity; he was constantly in danger, and, strange as it may

appear, more from the women than the men ; the latter took little notice of him, possibly on account of his youth ; for being a fair-haired Englishman, he appeared younger than he really was—at all events he created an immense sensation among the ladies, and received many proofs of their anxiety to do him honour—in a certain manner.

The Chieftain's wife was a Moorish princess, something marvellously divine in the way of beauty ; but like the great comets, she only made her appearance at rare intervals. On one of these occasions she chanced to see Harold, and he saw her ; being of rather a susceptible age he was violently smitten : really there was some excuse for it. The Princess, too, it would appear, was struck by the fair hair and blue eyes of the young midddy ; so, as Will Shakespeare hath it, they no sooner met but they looked ; no sooner looked but they loved ; no sooner loved but they sighed ; no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason ; no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy : and in these degrees did they make a pair of stairs to marriage, which they proceeded to climb incontinent, or, more correctly speaking, were incontinent without marriage : they were in the very wrath of love, and they would together ; clubs would not have parted them. How-

ever it was necessary for both to proceed cautiously; as to Harold, the result must not be placed at his door, he suffered himself to be led blindly, certainly, but how many of us would have done likewise? We are not all Josephs, you know, reader.

By the order of this Princess, Harold was conducted to the bath, and if he had been a king he could not have been served more royally than he was. On emerging from this bath he found a suit of rich apparel ready for him, far more gorgeous than he had yet worn, and perfumed to the last degree. When arrayed he was very presentable, his crisp, curly hair curled more tightly than ever, and the small whisker and light moustache gave him a certain manly appearance; assuredly, as far as bodily comfort was concerned, he now felt himself in the seventh heaven.

We have been in the East, dear reader, and can assure you that nothing can be more different than your feeling on entrance and on exit from the bath when taken in the true Oriental style. Well; as soon as Harold had with assistance arrayed himself, he was conducted to an apartment in which was spread a perfect love banquet, served up in dishes of precious metal; several vessels containing choice wines were there also, having a wondrously suspicious like-

ness to those commonly used for the Sacrament. The apartment in itself was magnificent, and fitted sumptuously; poor Harold looked round with wonder and astonishment, which was increased at finding himself quite alone. Not long however was he left to himself, the Chieftain's wife entered, and he became confused; her appearance now dazzled him completely,—her beauty was truly of an exceeding high order. She led him, trembling, to the refreshments, placing herself close to him; they ate, drank, and looked at each other. The Princess was attired with becoming splendour, and in a style peculiarly well adapted to her; the arms and a great portion of the neck were bare, the silken vest which she wore set off the parts above the hips which were concealed: those parts below were encased in a bewitching pair of trousers of exquisitely fine material, too fine in fact altogether to conceal anything. And her feet were protected by a fairy-like pair of slippers, richly embroidered and tastefully ornamented with pearls; to sum up, she was a peri endowed most richly, possessing the power to enthrall and enchant the most scrupulously immaculate. Verily she required not jewelry to set off her charms, yet she wore gems that would have beggared many a royal diadem. The repast being ended, the *débris* quickly disappeared; bowls of pure

gold containing rose-water were brought in for the ablution of the hands; then, on salvers of the same precious metal, scented cigarettes, accompanied by golden vessels containing rich wines delightfully cool and refreshing. Harold had managed to pick up a smattering of the language, more especially terms of endearment; and now they smoked, sipped, and cooed in a most loving manner. Each reciprocated the passion of the other, and each smiled, blushed, languished, and drooped the eyelid. Love very soon ripens under a broiling sun, and the delightfully soft, downy cushions on which they reclined, wooed them in a manner not to be long resisted. She asked him if he could love her and be faithful to the trust reposed in him; his high spirit returned to him, and probably never was a man in greater danger than was he at that moment; but fortunately his lips remained closed; she saw the look however and was satisfied, rightly judging that he loved not to be doubted.

"Tell me now," she murmured, as though anxious to obliterate the remembrance by changing the subject, "tell me now of your home; although I love not those of your country I love you, and wish to hear of those who have protected you."

Harold grew pale and became sadly confused;

the fond companion of his childhood and youth appeared to stand suddenly before him, and reproach him sadly for disloyalty; the impassioned woman beside him became inquisitive and pressing; a fearful expression of rage swept over her glorious countenance, as a catspaw over mighty waters.

"Ha," said she, "young as thou art, thou hast loved another; is it so? may be, love her still. Speak, my beloved, tell me that it is not so."

And she looked at him with sparkling eyes, the crimson tide of life showing through the olive tint of her complexion. "But yet," she continued, as if anxious to avert the storm which evidently threatened him, "she may be thy mother, thy sister; speak quickly, keep me not in doubt." Thought was busy with Harold, he saw himself on the brink of a precipice; young as he was, he knew his danger. An idea swept through his brain, and he eagerly seized upon it.

"We never forget her who gave us birth; my mother then yet lives and I love her. When she passes away I shall revere her memory," was his answer. He thought it best to put Ruth quietly on the shelf, and it was so. She drew him panting to her fevered breast, and tremblingly impassioned, sank back in sweet abandonment, perfectly resigned.

Here we will draw the curtain because we know that—

“Pleasure has bounds ; too greedily pursued,
Enjoyment ceases, and disgust ensues ;
Thus, at first glance, some recent painting view’d,
The vernal landscape smiles in all its brightest hues :
But stand and gaze awhile, and by degrees
The eye grows tir’d, the colours cease to please ;
Its beauties vanish and its faults arise,
You think of other times and criticise.”

We may just simply add, however, that we do not condemn Harold for his conduct ; he was sorely tempted, and in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, the only difference between the man whom the world esteems as good, and he whom it condemns as bad, is simply this : the former has been sheltered from temptation, and the latter exposed to it.

CHAPTER XXV.

HAROLD'S *liaison* with the Chieftain's wife was fraught with immense danger to both; she could now scarcely conceal her affection for the young Englishman, and unfortunately was so completely a child of nature as to care little about so doing. But before proceeding further, we must endeavour to make our peace with those who may be inclined to cavil at the last chapter. We have (as the reader may and will observe) come back again to our young hero, and if we speak the truth (which we are always most anxious at whatever cost to do), having been absent from him so long, that really, considering the position in which we left him, the reader must have thought that it had been our intention to abandon him altogether, he being in a somewhat peculiar situation; one in which prudent people usually refrain from inquiring any further after their friends and acquaintances, lest they should be shocked outright by hearing something horrible of them. Now although we may not be possessed of all the virtues, we will venture to assert that we have not all the

vices of a *soi-disant* prudent character, and moreover, though it may not have been an easy nor indeed a praiseworthy task, to rake up bygones, yet we could not refrain from recalling an important character upon our stage, and giving forth a summary of his proceedings since we parted from him; and if by a fluke, a mist has risen and dimmed our intellect to such a degree as to raise a blush, then we humbly pray forgiveness and the kind reader's indulgence. In expiation we would fain return to our text and give an account of killed and wounded in the late skirmish. Let us hope that the flimsy disguise of wisdom may be stripped from self-conceit like brown paper, and that you, my dear reader, may now learn to laugh good-naturedly at the folly of others, and at the same time, with humility, to grieve at your own. You know perfectly well the little circumstance of the beam and the mote; our advice to you is, keep it constantly before you, and never forget that "*experience*," long intercourse with the learned, wise, good, brave, chivalric as well as contrarywise, teaches us "*the manners of mankind*," whereas the recluse, or he to whom it has not been granted to see the world, but simply to remain behind his desk in the counting-house, taking perhaps periodically his continental tour or trip to Scarborough, however great may be

his learning, or however deep may be his reading, must remain *in statu quo*, and be for ever a stranger to the mysteries which are alone revealed to the wanderer; for to the thinking man who hath wandered in many lands over distant seas, is alone granted such a boon. Let then these few remarks be taken for the author's apology; no offence is in any way intended, and we trust that none will be taken.

However great may be our temptation, we cannot err with impunity; Tarquee and Mara each became jealous, and not of one another, but of a third person; they formed an alliance and concerted measures for the destruction of young Overdon. Circumstances caused procrastination, which is the thief of time, and assuredly in this instance saved Harold's life. The brig arrived suddenly, and the pirate Chieftain announced to the women that they must seek safety for a time in Tunis, as he anticipated an attack on the place by two frigates which had chased him in. Accordingly the females departed under escort, and in such precipitate haste as to banish thoughts of revenge and murder. We know the result of the engagement, and can take up the thread of our yarn.

The work of destruction on shore having been accomplished, treasure and spoil, together with

the prisoners, conveyed on board; the men were mustered, and it was found, on putting the casualties on board the two ships together, that thirty-eight men were killed, among them one lieutenant, two midshipmen, a master's mate, and three quartermasters; fifty-two men wounded, and among them Lieutenant Bowden slightly. Captain Darby, who was anxious to get him a step if possible, saved the brig, sent the prisoners securely shackled on board of her, and gave the command to Bowden, with orders to proceed home to England, the bearer of despatches announcing the successful termination of the affair, and all particulars.

Having arranged these little matters entirely to his satisfaction, and visited his wounded with a kind word and a smile of approval for each, Captain Darby approached his friend, Lord Edgar and said :

"Do you know, I think we have Overdon's son on board; by George, if it is not so, I was never more mistaken in my life."

"Harold Overdon, do you mean? I sincerely trust that it may be so. But how came he among pirates? Surely he can never have disgraced his name and rendered himself eligible for a halter?"

Darby smiled, and said, "Why, Galbraith, pray how the deuce did you get among pirates,

yourself? Am I to consider that you are eligible for the yard-arm?"

"Well, let's see him and hear what he has to say; if his hands are clean, this will indeed be a happy day for many."

Accordingly they descended to the Captain's cabin, whither he had ordered him to be taken, and there sat Harold, now quite recovered, with a glass of madeira before him. Galbraith looked at him, but failed to recognize him; he had not seen him for some years, and boys change remarkably in many instances as they approach adolescence; in this instance it was a change for the better. He looked remarkably well, and his features had much improved; on the other hand, Harold instantly recognized Lord Edgar, and started up, saluting him with much affection.

"Nothing very far wrong there, Edgar," whispered Darby, as the young man eagerly inquired for those at home, with tears standing in his eyes and overflowing.

As soon as his queries were answered, Lord Galbraith said, "Now, Harold, it is necessary that Captain Darby should hear of the fate of the 'Brilliant,' and how the accident happened; who was saved, and in fact all about it. After that you can tell us of your life with the pirates, and how it happened that they permitted you

to exist among them ;” and as he said this Galbraith looked hard at him. Harold rather proudly returned the look ; he saw distrust and resented it. However, he turned to Captain Darby and told him everything, commencing with Boodle’s sad affection for the bottle ; the manner in which when under its debasing influence he treated his men ; of the various floggings ; of his conduct to Mr. Carrol, and at last he came to the final catastrophe of which he gave a full, true, and particular account. Altogether the manner in which he related the whole affair, as Darby told him, reflected great credit upon him. And the Captain continued, “ You were to have joined my ship ; your commission as lieutenant remained in my hands for months, and it was not until we had long given up all hope, that I returned it to the Admiralty. I sincerely regret your misfortunes, Mr. Overdon, and would gladly now receive you on board the ‘ Ruby,’ but perhaps, all things considered, as you have lost so much time you had better proceed with Bowden to England in the brig, and if still inclined to remain in the service, your interest will be amply sufficient to get your lieutenancy from the original date of the commission, which will give you sufficient servitude for another step in the ladder of promotion. And now I must away on deck and

get out of this; I leave you with his Lordship, who is no doubt anxious to have a private confab with you. Our friends outside, you know," he added to Galbraith, "will be getting very anxious; we've made a devil of a row since we came in. It was rather a tougher job than I had bargained for; but all's well that ends well."

No sooner had the Captain disappeared than Lord Edgar commenced, good-humouredly and yet pretty closely, to cross-examine Harold, who stood it admirably, and spoke out like a man to a man, unbosoming himself completely, and throwing himself upon the mercy of the court.

Galbraith heard him to the end, and then said, "I believe every word you have said, Harold; I know you would scorn to tell a lie; and now hear me while I read you a little lecture, and then we will bury this episode in your life for ever. Your faults are not so trivial as you may imagine, although they may be overlooked in consideration of your age, if your future conduct shows that you are worthy of such leniency; you must trench yourself deeply in order that the seeds of vice which have been sown in you may be eradicated, otherwise they will grow and flourish immensely, and the follies of youth become disreputable actions, when we have arrived at man's estate; remember this. You have

chosen the Navy as your profession, and become a sailor; take then a sailor's character and make it your own; be upright, generous, straightforward, honest, and honourable, then you will be a fitting protector to her whom I understand you love. She must hear nothing of what you have told me, or she will detest you; and as she is now my adopted daughter, why, perhaps, if I see all go well, I may put a spoke in your wheel; that is all I have to say, and now we will drop the matter altogether. Lady Ruth and her daughter are at present within a few miles of us, waiting for me to join them. We are bound to Genoa, you to England, so you will have plenty of time before we meet again to consider your position."

"My dear lord, may I see them, just but for a few moments? Then I think I should go home with a lighter heart."

"We will see; perhaps Captain Darby may have no objection."

"But where then is Sir Gilbert, you do not mention him at all, is he not with them? But no, you said Ruth was now your adopted daughter; he is gone where we must all go, poor fellow."

"He *is* gone," answered Galbraith, and he was silent.

Harold thought him moody and morose, he knew not his Lordship's thoughts.

CHAPTER XXVI.

As a matter of course the frigates had anchored, although we omitted to mention it, and when Lord Edgar and Harold stepped on deck they heard the orders given to turn the hands up—weigh anchor—pass the messenger below—ship the bars there, bear a hand—the men leant with all their weight on the capstan bars, and stepped out cheerily to fife and drum; very soon the frigate rode, short stay-peak; loose sails, and the sails are loosened as if by magic, but not let fall. Why not, do you ask? Just simply because we are not like the colliers in Sea Reach. Listen. “Are you all ready for’ed? ready there maintopsail-yard? Aft, there, are you ready? let fall—sheet home.” Then the capstan bars are reshipped, and the anchor weighed, catted and fished; we brace our yards if necessary, and cant our ship; up with our jib to help her round, then majestically she walks the waters, and in ten short minutes all is neat, tidy, and clean as a new pin. Harold, as we know, had never been in a frigate; he watched everything with interest, and when the ‘Ruby’ was under weigh, he and Lord Edgar turned to

the 'Emerald.' As soon as the 'Ruby' had drawn sufficiently ahead, the same orders were given and obeyed with equal precision on board of her, and she took up her position and followed with mathematical precision. As soon as the 'Ruby' opened out the Mediterranean, Darby glanced quickly round for the 'Glenelg,' and there she was, but far down to leeward.

"Oh, we shall have plenty of time for dinner, which will now shortly be served, and really I could not part with you, my old friend, before you had taken some of my salt; we are birds of passage—here to-day, gone to-morrow; there is no knowing when we may meet again."

"Why don't you settle down on shore, Darby? A man of your property would find plenty to employ his mind in the management of it; whereas now you waste your substance on lawyers to manage it for you, and in addition, lead a roving life which will, ere long, become excessively distasteful; we cannot always remain young, you know."

"My good friend, I am a son of the sea; it is my native element. I was born on its heaving bosom, and as long as I have a feather to fly with, just so long shall I lead this roving life, as you call it. But what has that young fellow said for himself? How has he passed his time among the freebooters?"

"According to his own account, the young rascal has revelled in luxury, and had nothing to do but to make love to beautiful women; he has seized time and opportunity, and been eminently successful. I have administered a rebuke, which let us hope will lead to good results."

"My dear Edgar, at his age we cannot expect perfection, and if we did, why, we should be grievously disappointed. I never yet heard but of One perfect model. We, poor, erring mortals, are accustomed to yield without thought to that which appears too often present pleasure; in fact, we are like puppets at a show, and the ladies have the strings in their hands."

"Then, Darby, what is the use of conscience, if we will not permit it to forewarn us of the commission of such acts as those of which Harold Overdon has been guilty? I sincerely trust that it has not ceased to be his inward monitor, because if I had the slightest notion of such a thing, it would be an imperative duty on my part to check any attempt at friendship and intimacy between him and those who are now under my charge. I have a better opinion of him: and as a proof of it, with your kind permission, you see I'm about to put confidence in him by throwing him in their way."

"My dear fellow, yours is a character I like

to study. All your ideas are gentlemanly; but we cannot all expect to come up to you, neither can you expect to find many equals. Temptation is very seldom resisted; to resist it successfully requires more resolution than most people imagine. However, here comes my steward to announce dinner; a few of my officers always dine with me, so perhaps you will excuse my not departing from an old rule on this occasion. Steward, tell that young gentleman that I request the honour of his company to dinner. I see he's spinning yarns to an attentive audience. By George, what cards he holds in his hand! With his interest, he can do anything. But I cannot complain."

"I think not," said Galbraith, and the two descended to Darby's after-cabin, and then passed to the dinner-table. Bowden had been invited by signal, and so was one of the party. In a dinner of this sort, on board ship, there is nothing particular to be noted; of course it differs widely from a party of civilians on shore, and from a military mess,—all depends upon the Captain, because all take their cue from him. There is a certain amount of condescension on his part, and a very proper reserve on the part of his officers. We need not repeat what has so often been repeated on this subject.

Most people now a-days know something or other about the Navy, and very little knowledge is required to be aware that no familiarity takes place. The Captain stands alone; he is the monarch, and unapproachable. The lieutenants in their turn, expecting respect from those beneath them, are excessively scrupulous in their demeanour, and so on, according to rank. That which we claim from the inferior, we must show to the superior. No innovation is suffered, and very properly, because any innovation in the service has an evil tendency; a tendency pregnant with mischief to all discipline and subordination: and to strict discipline and subordination we may safely put down our supremacy in naval matters to be mainly due. We suffer no radicalism on the quarter-deck. We toe the line, and never budge an inch, nay, nor the fractional part of it. Oh, it is undoubtedly a fine school for a young man if he is inclined to kick over the traces; and mind, the spirit is not broken; far from it; on the contrary.

Well, the cloth was removed; the steward placed the wine, and retired. Captain Darby, in a few well-chosen words, gave "The King—God bless him;" and after a pause, again rose, and with much feeling, after alluding to their late struggle, proposed "The memory of those who had fallen." This, as a matter of course

was drunk in solemn silence; and very shortly after, the party broke up.

Darby begged Lord Edgar to excuse him for a few moments, and he retired to his cabin with Bowden, to give him his despatches and final orders. Meantime the frigate and brig had neared the 'Glenelg' rapidly, the distance between them now was only about a mile-and-a-half, and by the time the Captain and Bowden came on deck it was lessened to a quarter of a mile; the 'Ruby' and brig hove to; the 'Glenelg' came down within pistol shot, and backed her mainyard. A boat had left the frigate with Darby, Galbraith, and Overdon sitting in the sternsheets, the latter (dressed now in lieutenant's uniform) steering; this circumstance did away with any chance of scrutiny on the part of the ladies; but to the eyes of love, although the little god is represented as blind, no particular scrutiny is required to make out a beloved object. Our Ruth, tempted by the beauty of the scene, as the frigate stood towards them, had remained on deck when she should have been below; and the boat had not got half-way between the two vessels before she had made out Overdon, or thought she did; unwilling however to indulge in vain hopes herself even, she said nothing of it to her mother, and as a matter of course there was a conten-

tion of feelings within her, which could result in nothing but temporary prostration at least. Weak as was her present state, more might almost be feared. Lady Ruth saw no one but her brother; on him she gazed, and inwardly returned thanks for his deliverance, as the boat shot up alongside. Tallentire and his crew gave their passenger three cheers, which was, Darby said, "a proof of the truth of his constant assertion, that an English sailor keenly appreciated all that was noble and good." They ascended the side.

Overdon remained for the present in the boat.

Edgar embraced his sister, and then passed on to his niece and ward; he was alarmed at her pallor.

"My dear ward, how excessively pale and ill you look; this will not do, we must try to alter it."

"You forget, my dear uncle, that we have had an anxious time of late. You disappeared in a manner most mysterious, and we narrowly escaped captivity or a fearful death." She stepped quickly past him to the side, and looked over; her eyes fell on the uplifted face of Harold Overdon; he had well resisted temptation, but now had no longer the power—in five seconds she was in his arms.

"Harold"—"Ruth"—these two words only passed between them; she had swooned in his arms; he bore her to a seat on deck, and most anxiously watched as her relatives administered restoratives.

At length she showed symptoms of returning animation. Lady Ruth gave Harold an affectionate reception, and smilingly hinted that her daughter would now be as well below in the cabin. "Old friends you are for such young people, and here you are the observed of all observers." Overdon took the hint, and managed admirably. Ruth recovered, and her lover lost no time in addressing her. "Ruth, dear Ruth, you are looking more beautiful than ever," said he, with an admiring gaze; "not only beautiful, but happy."

"I am happy now, Harold; this day has proved a blessing to me."

"A blessing to me too, dear Ruth, and yet it is at present transient; no sooner do we meet than we are separated."

"Separated!" exclaimed Ruth, and it must be admitted that the exclamation gave more than hope. "What do you mean, Harold, surely you will now proceed with us?" and she appeared breathlessly to await a reply.

"To England in that vile pirate brig I must go, my own Ruth, and each moment expect my

summons. Say then, dearest girl, do you—can you love me? Not for worlds would I have spoken, but now circumstances warrant my asking you the question. Answer it then, dearest, that I may know my doom.”

“I have ever loved you, Harold, nor do I acknowledge it with shame; to me you have always appeared good, pure, and noble; but this parting is terrible; my heart, dear Harold, will go with you; my daily life, one perpetual thought of you; my thoughts and prayers will ever follow you to bless you.”

Harold caught her in his arms, pressed his lips to her brow with passionate fervour. “Ruth, my beautiful, beloved Ruth, how can I now live out of the light of your presence?” A voice down the companion appeared to hint pretty plainly that he would have to try it. “‘Ruby’s’ boat’s waiting for Mr. Overdon,” shouted Tal-lentire, who had been desired so to convey the intelligence. “We shall meet again shortly, I trust, my darling,” whispered Harold, and straining her once more in his embrace, as if by one sudden effort to shorten the painful scene, he tore himself from her, and rushed up the ladder. Poor Ruth! she sank back upon a seat, and became once more unconscious of all around her.

At the gangway Harold found Lady Ruth

and Galbraith, the former embraced him, and the latter shook his hand heartily, and the "God bless you" was sincere and honest. Darby and Bowden were seated, and waiting. Harold joined them in a trice, and seizing the tiller steered as he was ordered for the brig; the mainyard of the 'Glenelg' swung slowly round, and Tallentire shaped his course for Genoa.

Not long did it take the sturdy rowers to complete the distance, and the three officers boarded the brig, and half-an-hour after Darby shook hands with Bowden and Overdon at the gangway, and returned to the 'Ruby,' but the crew of the brig, without orders, gave him three rattling cheers at parting. The Captain stood up in his boat, and uncovering his head acknowledged the salute, and then the brig filled and proceeded on her voyage; the frigate shortly after made sail, and followed the course which had been pursued by the 'Emerald.' So the friends were scattered; almost a matter of course in this world, where we meet but to part again.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AND now Harold found himself, after all his troubles, "Homeward Bound." In those days they understood the picturesque. Monstrous steamers did not shower soot and filth over the whole face of the beautiful Mediterranean. We were not in such a deuce of a hurry about everything, but we were slow and sure. We had to depend upon the wind, and, although progression was more uncertain, the motion was far more pleasant and agreeable. While dancing over the heaving bosom of the deep, our feelings were of a more lofty character, and finer than at present, and we had not every now and again an unpleasant jerk conveyed to us by the machinery to bring us down in our own conceit, and cause us to study the sublime through the medium of a long train of black smoke. Not a bit of it. The breeze filled our canvas, and whistled pleasantly in the rigging. The waves leaped and skipped as though pleased to bear us onwards. We took unto us the wings of the morning, and flew whither we pleased. We left the land far astern of us; all its laws and

littleness we were free from. We loved the sea, and with confidence reposed on the bosom of the mighty waters; whether still and quiet, or bounding and jumping in wild joy, it mattered not, we knew that they could never be provoked to anger, having no equal. But now! no wonder if old Neptune is moved to wrath occasionally, when such pranks are played in his dominions by a parcel of fire-eating monsters, whose drivers after all are nothing but "man,"—vain man. We in Harold's time were much more cautious, we did not disturb the old gentleman. But our object now more especially is to say, once for all, that it is impossible for the mighty sea to be angry. The thing is absurd. Look at the fearful power and strength! Why, you can form no adequate conception of it, and then ask yourself if it is possible for such might and power to indulge in a game of romps without being somewhat rough? No matter how gentle may be the intention, then, as it warms in play, why there is a chance of the bumps and little injuries becoming more serious, especially when we consider that man! puny, insignificant man! is the insignificant companion in these gambols, *volens volens*!

The circumstances attending this homeward voyage are not of sufficient interest to warrant us in chronicling them. The curtain of night

fell slowly and heavily as usual upon the bosom of the waters, and the brightness of day succeeded with undeviating regularity, the winds and the waves, sportive and owning no sympathy with mortal necessities, slept not. The breeze increased to a gale, and the waves swelled in fierce disdain until they became sea mountains with their summits capped with snow. And then the wind died away, and the waters became tranquil. Yet onwards darted the little brig. So fine were her lines, so light and graceful the entire fabric that a light air was sufficient to propel her at speed, and at length she passed up the English Channel, and anchored at Spithead.

Bowden and Harold went on shore together, and proceeded to the Admiral's office. Here all reports were made, and despatches handed over. Overdon having narrated an account of the loss of the 'Brilliant,' and briefly summed up his adventures, was ordered forthwith to proceed home to his father, who grieved for him as one dead, and we will venture to affirm that no order was ever more cheerfully obeyed. Master Harold stowed himself away on board the mail, and bowled off northward as fast as four good horses could manage conveniently to get over the ground.

Arrived in London he transferred himself (for

he had no effects to transfer) to the Northern Mail, and took a fresh departure. As he approached nearer and nearer to the home of his ancestors, and now of his own immediate kinsmen, we may rely upon it that his generous heart beat quicker and yet more quickly as each milestone was passed.

The sun sank to rest as they entered upon the last five miles, and by the time four of them were accomplished, twilight had been succeeded by a more sombre tint, yet it was not dark. Stars innumerable studded the heavens.

Harold stopped the coach, descended, fee'd the guard, and started off to walk the remaining mile. Looking up at the stars he murmured a prayer of thanksgiving for all mercies vouchsafed to him. He stopped at the well-known entrance. Thoughts came thick upon him, and a teardrop dimmed his eye as he passed in and traversed the park. On nearing the house he became nervous, and feared to make too sudden an entrance. When he left that house he was a boy. Now he felt himself a grown man. He remembered that Lord Edgar had not known him, and therefore judged that his features had been altered by exposure and trouble. Gathering his boat-cloak (a recent purchase at Portsmouth) around him, he approached

the house. The door happened to be open, and he walked in ; then, irresolute, walked out again, passed round to the windows, whence lights gleamed, and saw his father, mother, brother, and sister at the table attired in mourning ; that it was for him never entered his head. He could restrain himself no longer. Re-entering the house he seized the handle of the door, turned it, and found himself in "the" presence. Then there was a scene, for the son that had been dead was alive again,—had been lost and was found. The sister looked up, thinking it was a servant, and she knew him, or at least guessed shrewdly.

"Oh ! mamma, dear mamma, here he is," she cried, and staggering towards him, fell fainting in his arms.

Pale as death, the happy mother rushed towards him, and hung on his neck ; then holding her head off, gazed proudly at her noble boy as she called him. The tears streamed from the eyes of the Squire as in his turn he welcomed the lost one ; and he poured forth his thankfulness to the Great Architect of the Universe for having answered his prayers.

Harold strode with his sister still in his arms to the window, opened it, and reproached himself bitterly for having killed her by his great thoughtlessness.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed the joyful mother between her sobs, "joy—never kills."

Neither did it, for Rose Overdon quickly recovered; but nothing would induce her to let go her brother, so she kept one hand while the mother fondled the other. It was April weather in that house—smiles and tears. Overdon rang the bell violently. The servants rushed up scared.

"Place everything in the house on the dining-hall table," he shouted, dancing about like a Dervish; "everything eatable and drinkable, I mean. Don't you see who's come back to us? Have you no eyes, blockheads?" And he worked himself up to an awful pitch of nervous excitement.

"Why, surely, it's Master Harold," said the servants—old retainers—and with all the licence given to old retainers, they gathered round him, and welcomed him home with joy. The news spread through the house like wildfire, and in the servants' hall, as well as in the dining-hall of the master, there was a feast and mirth; their sorrow had been turned into joy. Poor Mrs. Overdon! her wild cry, like the joy-screach of the mountain bird, proved the depth of her feeling; if we had not even noted the lightning-like rapidity with which she leaped from her seat, and darted forward when

Harold's sister first cried out; and as to the Squire, none could doubt his thankfulness. We return to this because we omitted perhaps the most touching of all little episodes in this history. It occurred when father and mother had just embraced their son. The Squire opened wide his arms, and the next moment the weeping woman was clasped to his bosom.

"Oh Katherine, Katherine," he exclaimed, while the hot flood rolled down his cheeks, "how often my wife, my dear wife, how often have these tears been shed in our anguish, and now how ecstatic our joy! Heaven hath indeed been merciful, and this is the hour prayed for during long, long years."

At length all sought rest; to many, doubtless, sleep came unbidden; but neither the Squire nor his wife could get hold of any, even if they had wished it ever so. They talked away to each other, and built many an aerial castle for their son. What mattered it to them that hearts are broken, heads are turned, by castles in the air; they were in the first flush of excitement and exultation; thus the night passed with them, and morning dawned. Harold slept like a top, and was up and out fresh as a lark betimes. Then the party met at breakfast,

and the wanderer narrated his adventures—thrilling them with horror, inspiring them with fear, exultation, at deeds of daring and hope—by turns; keeping modestly himself in the background. This narrative took the edge off their curiosity. When the meal was ended, the Squire took himself off to his library, where he remained secluded during the entire morning; the ladies were busy preparing for company. The fatted calf had been killed, and the peasantry and gentlefolks around were all to mingle that day at the feast. Master Harold put his abilities to the test by decorating a huge marquee, which had been erected in the park fronting the house. All were busy, all happy; and none more so than the father, who passed the morning in devotion. The park's gates were thrown wide open, and now a stream of gaily clad peasants appeared, all wending their way towards the house. Now and again an equipage swept by them. The company were congregating, and at length all guests bidden had arrived, and the family moved from the house to the marquee; their entrance was the signal for an ovation. Harold was the observed undoubtedly; he was the lion of the day, and many a bright-eyed damsel bestowed on him a sweet side-look. The more gentle of the company received Harold more quietly, but just as

cordially. They were seated according to their respective ranks in the graduating scale. The Squire looked radiant; sables had been hove overboard at once, and all was now peace and happiness. The feast ended. Squire Overdon had the tables cleared, and himself led off the ball, Mrs. Overdon bestowing her hand for the nonce on a bumpkin. Harold selected a beauty, you may depend upon it, and they tripped it merrily, strengthened by the good strong ale which was much more plentiful than water. Egad, nothing now-a-days comes up to the jolly old merry-makings. Time passed on—some few months, perhaps, and one morning at the breakfast table the letter-bag arrived; Squire Overdon opened it, and doled out the contents. “Hullo,” said he, with a smile and sly wink, “here’s a foreigner, Harold, from Turin,” and he regarded the superscription for a moment, and then remarked, “A man’s hand after all—Edgar’s, or I’m much mistaken in the confounded pothooks and hangers.” Harold opened it, and devoured the contents. “It is from Lord Edgar, and the contents are not agreeable, except in one particular—my presence is desired at once as an especial favour. I’ll read it out.” Accordingly he commenced :

"MY DEAR HAROLD,

"You must excuse Lady Ruth's anxiety, and to that you must attribute the present epistle. At the same time, I am not quite indifferent, but as anxious to promote your honour and happiness as to secure that of my dear ward. The trying scene (for it must have been trying) with you on board the 'Glenelg,' cost the poor child a severe attack of increased illness; her hopes and affections appear centered in you, and now she seems miserable, almost heart-broken at the separation. Her cheek is pale—outwardly she wears a smile, but inwardly she weeps; her nights are sleepless, her pulse throbs unhealthily; however, I need say no more of that. There is but one course left open for you to pursue, and that is (if you can do so honourably, mind) to set off at once, and join us here. Make Ruth happy; restore her to her former self, and I will bless you. Show this to your father, and request him to place no obstacles in your way for my sake. Remember me to him kindly, and also to all your circle. Excuse haste. Come quickly.

"Yours devotedly,

"GALBRAITH."

"My dear Harold, you must go, and that immediately; sorry as we are to part with you.

Galbraith would not have written in that strain if there were not urgent reasons. I trust in God that you will make her happy."

The oracle had spoken; all the rest chimed in. Overdon was, as all heads of families ought to be, "the oracle." Harold heard what his father had said, but he was very far gone in love and sat for some time pondering on this letter with bewildered mind; and when he realized Ruth's present position, he bent his brow in his hands and gave way to grief. Fortunately others were more thoughtful; the mother had started for his room at once, and with her own hand put his things together for him; then summoning servants, the packages had been fastened down, and were out of the house awaiting the coach which would shortly pass before Harold had collected his ideas sufficiently to think of packing. He had, then, nothing to do but to bid farewell and follow his luggage; the coach pulled up, and he started once more on his pilgrimage.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

RUTH, after having watched the brig which contained Harold, until she was no longer in view, 'gave way to painful forebodings as to the future, and those torturing doubts and surmises that are peculiar to us all when engaged in endeavouring to solve and unravel events of the past and future. Her mind was now filled with so many horrors, fancies, and doubts, that when she retired for the night she could not sleep, but during the long hours remained tossing restlessly on her couch, unable even to snatch a few brief moments of slumber. She rose betimes and sought the deck, hoping that the fresh breeze of the morning would restore bloom which had vanished; but on returning to her cabin after a few turns, she found that her mirror still showed her a dull and heavy countenance. This she grieved at, not at the loss to herself, but for the sake of her mother, and she feared also that it might excite embarrassing comments from her guardian upon her health; but the summons to breakfast had been heard, and there was now no help for it; she made up her mind to encounter all as well as she could. She glided

into the saloon, and her colour rose as she saw all had assembled.

"We are waiting for you, my darling," said Lady Ruth; and Ruth hurried and took her seat at the table in a confused manner, and in her very anxiety to escape observation, she drew it upon herself by omitting her morning salutations, from which she had never deviated before. Lord Edgar looked at her steadily for a few moments, and then said:

"You appear agitated this morning, my dear Ruth; you are not well, I fear."

Ruth smiled, and pressing her fingers on her temples, she replied:

"My head is not quite well, that is all, I assure you."

Her guardian shook his head, which made Ruth all the more anxious to force the conversation into another channel, so she compelled herself to smile and assumed her usual vivacious manner. She talked with unnatural fluency, inspiring now both mother and guardian with anxious fears; they became alarmed at her state and were most anxious to arrive and secure advice. They were exceedingly fortunate in the wind, and did arrive at Genoa after a remarkably quick passage, without even taking stoppages into consideration. Tallentire was very handsomely rewarded, in fact his tip enabled

him to take a good share of the 'Glenelg' on his return home, and this was just what the generous donors wished and intended; the remainder of the crew were also pretty handsomely rewarded.

At Genoa our friends did not long remain, but pressed on to Turin, hoping there to have more command over the best medical advice, and made a very common mistake, for if in a multiplicity of counsellors there is wisdom, assuredly the same axiom does not go down as far as the medical profession is concerned. Ruth was surrounded by doctors, and no two agreed upon the nature of the disease, although the symptoms were explained pretty clearly; they all shook their heads though, that's one thing, and all said it was something very serious, which is another. But one day, as Galbraith was at the English Embassy, the Ambassador happened to mention that a distinguished member of the profession was then on a visit to him; Edgar seized upon this at once, and requested an interview with the English physician. Dr. Bolus immediately accompanied his Lordship to their hôtel and saw the patient, his opinion threw a light upon the affair at once. As soon as he was alone again with Edgar, he asked:

"Has this young lady, to your knowledge, placed her affections unworthily? I mean, in coming

out here, was it your object to remove her far from some suit of whom you did not approve?"

Lord Edgar told the story without hesitation, and the learned man said at once:

"Send immediately for this Harold Overdon, and let him marry her; so will you save her life;" and he turned away with such an air as to leave the impression that "he had spoken."

This accounts for the letter that caused Master Harold to top his boom from Overdon in such a hurry, and possibly parents may be able from this opinion to take a hint; we mean those parents who are disposed to render their children miserable all their days rather than suffer them to marry a degree and a half below themselves, or who, for the sake of an agreeable settlement, merely because there is a deficiency of a few hundreds or thousands in the fortune, relishing nothing but money, having a wrong notion of honour, oblige their children to marry with persons whom they cannot possibly love: these are iniquitous measures and those parents are domestic murderers. Happily our party belong to no such class, we can with pleasure remain with them, and regret that we must shortly part with them and with you, kind reader; in their case for ever, with you we trust but for a time.

Harold arrived, and was met by Lady Ruth and Lord Edgar, who were overjoyed at his arrival. Poor Ruth—our Ruth, was in her chamber. From her, had been concealed the message sent to Overdon, lest by some unlooked-for misfortune it might not be answered as they could wish, and so, by disappointment she might be thrown back further than ever. Now then, she was in her chamber reclining languidly on a sofa, feeling an unwonted depression and fatigue, when her mother entered the room, and placing herself at her side tenderly took her hand and bade her “prepare herself for some strange and unexpected tidings; and not painful ones either, my darling child, if we have read your feelings aright; and loving you so tenderly, we cannot have erred.” Ruth trembled.

“The Overdons—?” she half whispered. “Can it be?” Then, thinking she had said too much, she shrank within herself.

“Fear not, my child; go on.”

“You would not lead me to hope where no hope was. He has then arrived, unexpectedly—my Harold!”

“Tell me now, Ruth, is your engagement with Harold of your own free choice—your own wish; or has it been in compliance with the solicitations of others, or in accordance with our supposed wishes.”

The pride of the Gascoignes appeared for a moment in Ruth, but she answered firmly and quietly, "My own free choice, my own most earnest desire, is to be the wife of Harold Overdon, and God grant it may be soon."

"It shall be soon, my darling. He is not far from us at this moment. Nay, he is even in this house," and Lady Ruth embraced her daughter with joy, as she perceived the look of intense happiness which spread over her countenance at the intelligence.

As to Harold, he had long nurtured tender feelings with regard to Ruth; but now, well knowing that her serious indisposition had its origin in the mind, and believing that it had arisen through the medium of her affection for him, his heart was won; a heart capable of deep and undying affection. He now sat in one of their reception rooms, alone: Lord Edgar had just left him. Ruth entered, unaccompanied by her mother, and advanced timidly towards him with a touching expression on her countenance—one of languid melancholy. Oh! how the heart of the young sailor bounded as he looked on her glorious beauty, and recognized it as his own. She extended towards him a hand, cold, icy-cold, but beautiful in form; and a beautiful hand retains its shape and comeliness, even when the features have become sharp and wrinkled

by age. At present Ruth was in the height of her beauty; her eyes had become all at once bright in the presence of her lover. He took her in his arms, and murmured :

“Are you happy now, darling girl?”

“Oh, my head wanders strangely. But tell me, is—can this be true, or am I in a trance?” And her voice was painfully agitated.

“It is all true, my Ruth. I am here to take you to myself,” and he continued to pour his whole soul forth to her. He told her how wondrously beautiful she was, how bewitching, how much he loved her, and how ardently he longed to bind his fate with hers, and to pass through life’s pilgrimage hand in hand with her. She listened delightedly to him; there was a certain lively grace about our Ruth, a brilliant simplicity all the more captivating on account of its being judiciously blended with high breeding; in general every-day society, no young lady could be more calm, or endowed with more complete self-possession (this is an attribute peculiar to good birth, the insufferable sham is easily detected because the part is over-acted), but in private, in the more intimate relations of life, as at present, for instance, with her lover, no one could possibly indulge more in those little bursts of nature, so unstudied, yet so charming; savouring more of

the playful child, than of the highly cultivated and polished woman.

Harold's countenance beamed with happiness and admiration. Those two young people built many a bright castle in the air, as they sat. How anxiously Harold awaited "the event" — the great event of his life: as he retired to the room set apart for his use, his thoughts were busy. He walked to one of the windows and looked out. The weather was wet and stormy.

"This cannot be emblematical of my future, at all events," he murmured, and he reviewed his position with great satisfaction. Assuredly he might well do so, surrounded by an immense retinue of powerful and influential friends, aiding, nay, urging him onward on a smooth, pleasant road. Yes, he had all these, and in addition, a good heart, and a persevering will to surmount all obstacles and smooth over all difficulties. Reputation came to him as a free gift; he had not to earn it by nights devoted to study and mental labour; it appeared to be his birthright. Pleasant thoughts these, to retire with. No wonder that he smiled in his sleep.

He was up betimes in the morning. The heavens had been cleared by the storm of the previous night, and all looked serene and happy. Our four friends sat down to their breakfast, and a cheerful party they were. Harold could

scarcely remove his eyes from the countenance of his promised bride, and longed once more to find himself alone with her. An irresistible emotion impelled him towards her. No sooner were they left alone than he relieved the intensity of his feelings—warm and gushing came the words, breathing fervid admiration.

“Beautiful, beloved Ruth! I am utterly at a loss to express to you a tithe of the emotions I feel have vanquished me: to say that I love and adore you, is as nothing. Life in your society is to me a foretaste of paradise. Without you now, it would be impossible for me to exist; and yet I feel myself unworthy. Who could deserve such a divinity? My heart, my adoration, the consecration of my whole life to your service is as nothing; and yet it is all I have to offer to compensate for your condescension. Dearest, dearest Ruth, you are silent. Do you know that since we parted on board the ‘Glenelg,’ I have fed upon one sweet idea,—one holy image had sat enshrined in my heart? and now my brain reels with the idea of calling you my own for ever. I cannot realize it.”

Ruth’s cheek fell upon his shoulder. Ruth’s hand pressed his gently but eloquently; then was he filled with joy and confidence; he took her in his arms, sealed her lips with the burning

kisses of love, and vowed all that man could vow. In that position they remained long; she was silent; her joy and gladness were too mighty to be expressed by mere words; he poured forth his soul rapturously to her, and she smiled at him. Oh, hers was a heavenly smile. Harold lived in an ecstatic trance, and so did Ruth. The world that they inhabited was not the world of working, slaving man—no, it was of their own—a description of fairy land; they were alone of their kind—each had made of the other an idol, amid the ennobling creations of high art which surrounded them. Strange it is that we should surround the object of our affection with a halo. Ruth in her little heart cherished Harold as a choice being; she could not fancy that a being so perfect had ever existed—so beautiful, so lively, and accomplished; so manly, true, and brave. Was his sweet voice, indeed, only to sound in her enchanted ear?—his Adonis-like form only to move for the pleasure of her watchful eye? Was her will and gratification to be the only solicitude of his gentle heart? She could scarcely credit that he loved her—that she was indeed his promised bride—that his adoration still echoed in her ear, and his fond embrace still clung lovingly to her trembling lips. Then she wondered whether he would always love

her—be as fond constantly, as faithful as he now was devoted? Then came her high resolve, “My life shall be one long vigilant care to enchain him; his being shall be enthralled; never, never, shall he find me pall on him.”

“To-morrow, beloved Ruth, to-morrow! Oh will it never come? it appears, indeed, a lifetime. My Ruth, tell me, are you not weary of time?”

“Oh, my Harold, I cannot speak; I am so happy that I cannot speak.”

“And yet it seems to me that I can never speak too much with you, my Ruth. When I quit you for a time, I know that my words have not conveyed a thousandth part of what I feel for you.”

“You cannot possibly love me, Harold, more than I love you.”

“Oh repeat those blessed words, sweet Ruth; they cannot be repeated too often to me, my angel, my beautiful, my bride!”

“Not quite yet, Master Harold; but I must not be cruel; have it so then, my love—a few short hours, however, are all that remain to me of liberty; to-day I am mine own; to-morrow I shall be thine. Oh Harold, my own Harold, be to me always as you are now, and I shall almost worship you. Why should I doubt? Surely

there is treason in it, and treason must not exist 'tween me and thee.'"

But we cannot follow on. The conversation of love is inexhaustible; time is unheeded; hour glideth away swiftly after hour; there are the happy smiles of innocent triumph radiantly beaming with unbroken devotion. It is a season of felicity unalloyed; such seasons are too often fleeting—love makes us hypocrites.

In spite of the apparently sluggish pace of the old gentleman who is represented with the scythe and hour-glass, the eventful day at length arrived, and the ceremony was performed at the Embassy. Both Harold and Ruth were so happy, that they soon overcame any little embarrassment which their situation occasioned them—true love was theirs, and its course for once ran smooth. The happiest pair, perhaps, that ever were spliced they considered themselves as they started off for their honeymoon, on their return from which the whole party would set out for Merry Elms, taking London in their way, as Harold wanted another stripe or two on his sleeve. Now here, dear reader, we may venture to assert that their married life was happy. As a matter of course, even in their position, there came occasionally care and sorrow, but it made them rightly appreciate

their unbounded blessings. Would to God that parents were more thoughtful, more considerate. We should not then see so much that is disgusting and disgraceful; the office of Judge in the Court of Probate and Divorce would be almost a sinecure. But as long as we have among us parents who squander the means that should support and thoroughly educate the children with whom they are blessed, so that families are brought up in a dissolute and irreligious manner, as an infallible preparative to the most vicious practices; as long as we have among us the lascivious father, who will estrange himself from the mother of his children, preferring the company of others; as long as we have covetous parents, who will not believe that a compelled marriage is worse than a poisoned dagger plunged in the bosom of their offspring; as long as we have among us parents who not only train up their children in idleness, but in luxury and wantonness, so that their spendthrift sons are fitted to become fortune-hunters, and fortune-hunters only, and their daughters placarded for sale to the highest bidder; just so long shall we hear of ill-assorted marriages resulting in adultery and all kinds of wickedness. It is an awful pass that to which our Christian country has come in this the middle, nay, even far past the middle of the nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN the honeymoon was fairly ended (and neither Harold nor Ruth would consent to bate one jot of their privilege), they returned to Turin; the honeymoon had not in any degree sullied the brightness of their love, far from it, on the contrary it had served only to increase its fervour. Matrimony had wonderfully improved the appearance of our Ruth, she looked now as fresh as a mountain daisy. During their absence a letter from Squire Overdon had reached Lady Ruth, touching the projected marriage; we may as well just give an extract:

“ I can truly say, dear Lady Gascoigne, that when Edgar’s letter reached my son, and its contents were made known to me, I rejoiced; the idea of the marriage I embraced heartily and readily, from my regard both to you and to Ruth, and more especially as a most desirable event between two families who have for many, many years been near neighbours, and between whom, we may now say, there has ever existed good harmony through all mutual intercourse. Our dear Ruth I regard as an inestimable treasure

to a good husband, and pray God my son Harold may prove such; her personal qualifications, charitable disposition, good nature, and modesty are too well-known to need panegyric. Such an invaluable jewel I am most anxious to receive into my family. To discharge her matrimonial duties faithfully, she will find no slight task, but as she enters upon this most fearfully solemn covenant willingly and freely, it is my firm conviction that all will be well."

The four travelled together, and arrived without accident or incident worth recording in the modern Babylon. Sir Jeremy Diddler welcomed his kinsman cordially, and made no difficulty at all.

"Let me see, you have been a lieutenant now—" and he paused, then continued immediately. "That pirate business, yes, a most fortunate thing, you distinguished yourself there, and we must manage to make a Commander of you; need not enter into detail. Let me see, you like the Mediterranean station, eh? Glorious for Mrs. Overdon, you know; and when we've got you in command of a sloop, and you've run about a little, why, we must manage to give Darby, or some other captain of a frigate, a line-of-battle-ship, and post you into a frigate, order you home, and there you are. That will suit

you, eh? Well, now you can rejoin your bride; don't leave her too much alone, they don't like it. Let me see; address, 'Merry Elms;' all right, my boy, you will hear from me when you have had sufficient time on shore. Good-by, kinsman; my duty to Lady Gascoigne and Lord Galbraith—love to the bride, you know;" and the old gentleman smiled as he brushed the snuff from his shirt-frill.

So far, so good. Harold was remarkably well satisfied. As he drove back to join the party bound northwards, he could scarcely refrain from shouting in the plenitude of his joy. Nothing now detained them, so they started off again for Merry Elms. Ruth looked a little serious at first, but when she heard that she was to accompany her husband, why, she cheered up.

"Only for a time, my love, you know; let me get post-rank, and then a long farewell to the sea," said Harold. "It is really so very kind of old Sir Jeremy to push me on, and there is so much generous goodness about him, that I could not refuse to do as he appeared to wish; I am profoundly impressed by his extreme kindness."

"You are too much a man of the world to be offended by my frankness, I am sure, Harold," said Lord Edgar; "so permit me to

remark that I think you *should* be profoundly impressed by his extreme kindness. A passed midshipman of nine-and-twenty has been trying for promotion very hard for some years; he has been on foreign, and the most unhealthy of stations, too, and had plenty of hard work; he cannot get one miserable step. You, on the contrary, have promotion thrust upon you wholesale. He requires it as a means to procure a livelihood, every little addition of pay being an object; you get it without requiring it, and accept it only for a time. Mrs. Overdon, I congratulate you on your having obtained a husband who can command rank without earning it, and who can afford so lightly to esteem his great privilege." There was more in the tone than in the words.

"You value at a low figure rank so acquired, is it not so, Lord Edgar?"

"Without fear of misconception, my dear fellow, I must say, that you have very correctly expressed my sentiments," was the reply.

"Indeed, my dear uncle, I think you are somewhat severe on Harold; and, if I mistake not, you yourself have before now availed yourself of your prerogative and advanced your friends, as in the case of Captain Darby, of which you yourself have spoken. Was he not in command of a frigate, through your interest,

at the mature age of five-and-twenty?" Our Ruth was nettled, and spoke up fearlessly.

"He was, and what you say is perfectly true; but herein lies the difference. Darby is a thorough sailor, he was born at sea, and through life he has continued to love the sea with a love surpassing that of woman; in pushing him forward with my interest, I considered that I conferred a benefit on the State."

"And now, my dear Edgar, it is time I interposed; this matter has been taken up somewhat warmly, and now I beg that it may proceed no farther. If you really do take an interest in this passed midshipman, let Harold take him with him, and he will, I know, take the earliest opportunity of giving him a step. It is absurd to quibble, more especially as I notice you do not found your objections on principle; you gained for Captain Darby his advancement; if he had been all you have depicted him, he would have obtained it for himself without your assistance."

"I cry quarter, sister mine; we cannot wage war with women. If Harold is disposed to take this young man by the hand, he will not so particularly oblige me, but he will find that by remembering others in his prosperity, he adds an hundredfold to his sense of satisfaction, besides which, such an action acts as a good

stomachic,—we do not suffer so much from qualms of conscience.”

“Before we are fit to command, we must show ourselves perfectly tractable when commanded by others; such has been my object during my short career, and now I shall be proud to consider Lord Edgar my flag-officer, and when he sees it necessary to give me an order, I shall consider it my duty promptly to obey.” Harold thought best to speak quietly.

“I order you now to give me your hand in all good fellowship. You have spoken well, and having now for some weeks been in command of a smart frigate,”—he nodded and smiled at Ruth—“you have given us an opportunity of remarking the high state of discipline you preserve, and, also have improved her appearance to such a degree as to merit an encomium. Continue always in the course you have commenced with, and the flag-officer will have no reason to complain. As to the midshipman, Harold, I wish you would take him by the hand; of late, applications for interest, have tumbled upon me in such numbers, that really I cannot myself personally apply. It is a deserving case, and I believe the young man will do you credit.”

“As soon as I hear from Sir Jeremy we will hunt him up, and if I can be of any assistance,

it is not necessary for me to say it shall be as you wish."

Time passed on—Harold and his wife had paid a long visit to Overdon. Ruth appeared the darling of the old Squire's heart; but their joy was now for the first time since their marriage to be broken in upon; a mounted courier from Merry Elms with an official letter for Harold—a most portentous-looking package it was, containing a note from Sir Jeremy Diddler himself; a commission as Commander, and an appointment to the 'Greyhound' sloop-of-war, ordered to convey despatches to Lisbon, and then return to Portsmouth. Poor Ruth, this was a blow to her. She knew that by reason of her present state she could not expect to be allowed to accompany her husband; but she was not selfish, she bade him go and fulfil his destiny, with her blessing. It was a hard trial, but God's will be done, and so they parted.

Harold sailed in due course, and arrived in the Tagus all well. At that time all was still and quiet; it was not until some years afterwards that there was a stir, and wooden legs became cheap. Having command of money, the Commander of the 'Greyhound' kept up a good table, and was never seated at meals without, at all events, two or three officers; the passed

Midshipman was with him doing duty as Acting Lieutenant, and Harold showed him favour. Verily his was a hard case, but there were then, and are now, many such. As far as age was concerned, he was about ten years his Commander's senior; but then it does not naturally follow that he was well suited for command; after all said and done, there were many men in the Navy at that time utterly unfit for a situation of trust; as to age it is nothing; no matter how young a Captain may be, he is Captain, and must be obeyed implicitly, by virtue of the commission given him by the Admiralty; but this particular Midshipman was not a man addicted to the bottle, neither was he a blockhead, and Harold determined on promoting him.

Their passage homewards was long; they met with strong easterly gales, and really Harold showed himself quite able to knock a ship about; he earned for himself golden opinions among the men, and even the officers could find no fault with him except on the score of age.

At length the 'Greyhound' brought up at Spithead, and the young Commander waited on the Port Admiral (old Shirley), reported himself, and was about to leave, when despatches suddenly arrived from London, and he was desired to remain while the Admiral opened and read them.

“Upon my word, Captain Overdon, you are the most fortunate man in the service. We have now, thank God, a Prince of Wales; permit me to congratulate you on your sudden promotion—heirs to the throne are not born every day.”

Harold was astonished certainly, but not less delighted; he was posted, and could now with honour retire from the service, leaving room for others, whose inclination or necessities demanded a long sojourn on the fickle wave—while he himself bore up for Merry Elms.

Harold's married life so far had been sunshine, and it remained with him. Of course there never was yet a couple who had not now and again, a few trifling annoyances—it may be a fact, but we do not endorse it, that we are happier for having been through the refining flames of affliction; perhaps the human heart becomes purified and made holier and better by chastisement, however that may be.

Master Harold—we beg his pardon—Captain Overdon, was intensely happy, surrounded by his precious little family; and as he took the eldest child, his dark-eyed darling, Little Ruth, upon his knee, he fervently prayed that she might be as much like her mother in all things as in features and gentleness, and assuredly, notwithstanding honours, rank, and fame, which

were showered upon him like rain, none could doubt that he found the full fruition of all happiness in that most blessed of all earthly blessings—a united family and an English home.

Time passed rapidly, years rolled on, light hearts have grown heavy, since Overdon first nursed little Ruth; dark locks have been streaked with snowy monitors of age or souvenirs of suffering. Death has claimed his victims. Lord Edgar, Lady Ruth, Squire Overdon and Mrs. Overdon have passed away, gone home to their rest, and Merry Elms, and the old ivied castle belong to the Captain and our Ruth. Overdon is inhabited by the Captain's sister Rose, who has married, and settled there. The brother slept peacefully beneath the turf—let us hope that those we love are translated to a better soil.

In each of these homes there was a mutual consideration for each other's wishes on both sides, and without this, you may rely upon it, my dear reader, true and permanent happiness in the married state is impossible. We must not have any striving for mastery, no attempt at management, for where this is the case, we find, those that should assist each other, and dwell together in harmony and affection, passing a life of discord, and rendering each other miserable. The husband who is not influenced by a

prudent and sensible wife is unworthy; but the wife who attempts to rule her husband decreases her happiness, by usurping his authority.

Of course our characters, one and all, have long since smouldered into dust; while they lived, they waited patiently for the day of rest and deliverance, which day, dear reader, must dawn for us, sooner or later; let us therefore, whilst sailing through the troubled waters of affliction, or over the pleasant stream of prosperity, steer steadily a true course by the compass, which will bring us safely to our haven of rest in "The End."



the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased by 50% (Mental Health Foundation 1999). The prevalence of mental health problems has increased in the general population, and the incidence of mental health problems has increased in the prison population (Mental Health Foundation 1999).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the mental health needs of prisoners. The Department of Health (1999) has published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (1999) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners. The Department of Health (1999) has also published a strategy for mental health services, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of prisoners.

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